Reservist Jucutan pleads not guilty. » PAGE 3

Regal Movies: 'The Force Awakens' on Thursday. » PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

9 DAYS BEFORE Christmas

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXV, Issue No. 249

www.saipantribune.com | WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2015 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune | 75¢

'QC filing huge step in ACG investment'

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Alter City Group chief executive officer Edvon Sze described the refiling of their Qualifying Certificate application with the Commonwealth Development Authority as a huge step in completing their $1.2-billion casino and resort project on Tinian.

Sze, along with ACG senior vice president for gaming and business development Albert Davia and finance and accounting manager Ador Songcuan, personally turned over the required documents to the CDA office in San Jose yesterday.

CDA executive director Manuel A. Sablan and economic development analyst Carline B. Sablan received the documents.

Carline Sablan said that Alter City first filed its QC application a few months ago but the documents they submitted were incomplete.

The qualifying certificate program was created to lure new investors and businesses by granting them partial or full tax breaks and other incentives over a fixed number of years. The application comes with a $15,000 filing fee.

See ACG on Page 4

JON PEREZ

Commonwealth Development Authority executive director Manuel A. Sablan, right, watches as CDA economic development analyst Carline B. Sablan receives the Qualifying Certificate documents submitted by Alter City Group yesterday at the CDA office in San Jose.

Hunter presented with SYP Community Leader Award

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Young Professionals presented their Community Leader Award to Community Outreach Recovery Efforts member Glen Hunter on Saturday at Kanoa Resort during their Christmas and community efforts celebration.

SYP president Mable Ayuyu congratulated Hunter and recognized him as the recipient of this year's Saipan Young Professional's Community Leader Award, noting his selfless efforts and his dedication to helping out in the recovery efforts after the devastation of Typhoon Soudelor.

In his message on Facebook, Hunter said: "I am so humbled to have been presented with this award. I think it should have been the other way around though. The SYP are the true community leaders. At times the frustrations brought on by

See HUNTER on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CORE member Glen Hunter is presented with the Community Leader Award by the Saipan Young Professionals on Saturday at Kanoa Resort during their Christmas and community efforts celebration.

RESOLUTION FOR TERMINATION OF COMPACT BY 2018

'Resolution has implications for FSM citizens'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE and DAISY DEMAPAN
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTERS

The administration of Gov. Eloy S. Inos understands the concerns posed by Federated States of Micronesia citizens living in the CNMI about a resolution introduced in the FSM Congress that calls for the early termination of its Compact of Free Association with the United States. The Compact allows FSM citizens to travel freely, live, and work in the United States and its territories, including the CNMI.

Press secretary Ivan A. Blanco said FSM citizens living in the CNMI are concerned about the resolution because it may affect their immigration status and

See FSM on Page 4

INSIDE

NATION

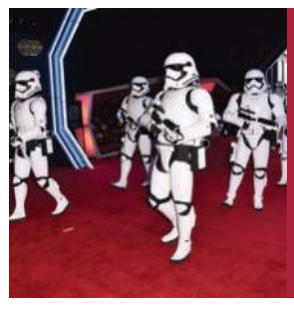
More Americans support sending U.S. ground troops to fight the Islamic State.

» PAGE 14

ASIA

Typhoon Melor crosses over central Philippines, leaving one man dead.

» PAGE 15



LIFE & STYLE

The next generation of "Star Wars" films kicks off with an elaborate debut.

» PAGE 19

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College's participation in the Dec. 12 leadership training in Guam was further boosted with the support of Best Sunshine International, Ltd. In this photo, BSI chief services officer Tao Xing is flanked by the organization's leaders, from left to right, senator Lorielyn Lacay, senator Andrew Villanueva, treasurer Roman Tudela, president Keisuke Yoshida, vice president Salvi Villanueva, secretary Lupe Camacho, and senator Riya Nathanri.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orilla confirmed to NMC board

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate confirmed last week the re-appointment of Elaine Hocog Orilla to the Board of Regents for the Northern Marianas College, thereby fulfilling the seven-member board requirement.

According to the college's website, Juan T. Lizama serves as board chairman; Michaela U. Sanchez is treasurer, while Frank M. Rabauliman, Maria T. Peter, Cynthia I. Deleon Guerrero, and Elizabeth D. Rechebei, Ed. D. are regents.

Orilla received her bachelor's degree in secondary education from the University of Guam and later sought graduate work at the University of San Jose and the University of Hawaii in vocational education and administration.

She was an instructor at the Northern Marianas College Rota campus and was the site coordinator for the Upward Bound program on Rota. She has also worked as a classroom teacher and a school guidance counselor at Rota Elementary and Rota High School before retiring in 2002. Orilla has received several certifications in education and participated in many workshops and trainings during her time as an educator.

The CNMI governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the Board of Regents. Orilla's last appointment expired in May 2014.

U Save Car Plus
5-2006 Toyota Sienna Van
3-2011 Hyundai Accent
We have many more affordable, quality used cars for sale
Visit us at Garapan,
U Save Car Rental or call at 989-4676

LEGEND REALTY
Exclusive Real Estate Agent for Best Sunshine International
and Representing Multiple Investors throughout Asia
SEARCHING FOR:
Hillside property or
View property or
Beach front property or
Beach Road property or
Rural property
CONTACT INFORMATION:
Marianas Business Plaza, Suite 202
670-484-5821
legendrealtycnmi@gmail.com
INFORMATION REQUIRED:
Map location
Total Area
Building area (if with existing building)
Title information
Asking price

Join the CLUB
CLUB C CASINO & ENTERTAINMENT
YOUR CASINO AND ENTERTAINMENT PARADISE IN SAIPAN
$2 THOUSAND DOLLARS SUPER DRAW
EVERY WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
BETWEEN 9:00PM AND 11:00PM
$26,800
and Me
NEW YEAR'S EVE DRAW
Ladies Night Margarita Wednesday
FEATURING
Tanqueray • El Conquistador
Skyy Vodka • Jack Daniel's
$4.00
$5.00
5PM - 9PM
Come and Listen to
MIKE BLUE
Sing R&B
at Club C
OPEN DAILY: 12:00 noon to 4:00 a.m. | 234-0088 | www.clubcsaipan.com
Must be 18 to enter and 21 to consume alcohol | Designated Smoking Game Area
Located at the Lobby of Kanoa Resort, Beach Road, Susupe
WiFi
www.facebook/clubcsaipan

Reservist Jucutan pleads not guilty

Jordan M. Jucutan, a teacher and a member of the U.S. Army Reserves, pleaded not guilty yesterday to allegations that he stole referral bonuses from the U.S. Army Reserves totaling $9,000 by fraudulently claiming that he recruited five potential soldiers and claiming the cash incentives for himself.

Jucutan, through court-appointed counsel Pamela Brown-Blackburn, entered a not guilty plea during his initial court appearance yesterday in the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy released Jucutan on his own recognizance with some conditions.

Assistant U.S. attorney Russell Lorfing said the U.S. government has no problem releasing the defendant on his own recognizance.

Jury trial will begin in February 2016.

An indictment charged Jucutan with theft of government property, five counts of aggravated identity theft, and nine counts of wire fraud. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Regal Movies: 'The Force Awakens' on Thursday

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

"The Force" is likely to awaken this week after the Regal Entertainment Group updated their website with new showtimes and available tickets for Saipan residents to view *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* at Hollywood Theaters tomorrow, Dec. 17.

The much-anticipated premiere of the new movie will be shown in 3D at 7pm and 10:15pm. Regular screening is at 7:20pm and 10:40pm

With the island's only theater shut down since the devastation of Typhoon Soudelor in August, news of the opening is close to a "Christmas miracle" for dedicated moviegoers.

Online movie ticket seller *Fandango* also lists the premiere of the next installment of the epic space opera franchise on Thursday. *Saipan Tribune* contacted the Regal Entertainment Group's movie line and received information that the movie will be aired on Friday at the same showtimes.

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip is also listed on the website to air this Friday until Sunday along with the Star Wars movie, which comes after 10 long years.

"My Christmas wish just came true!" Star Wars superfan Galvin Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune.*

Moviegoer Jackie Jucutan already purchased tickets for her and her husband to watch *Star Wars* on Thursday. "I bought it right away because I miss the movies," she said.

"It gives us another alternative on what to do for date night," she added. "And it is perfect timing right before Christmas break, patrons won't be bored. I am hoping they will get to show some of the movies that we missed when they were closed."

Leslie Reyes, 44, of Garapan, said he's happy that Regal Theaters came through and will be premiering the seventh installment of the Star Wars saga.

"Since the theaters got closed last August I really had no thoughts about watching Star Wars and since everyone is in a predicament due to the typhoon the last thing on my mind is to go and watch a flick...and then the new Star Wars trailer got released on YouTube and for all fanatics it was a spectacle, because of the over-the-top effects. I know it will do good because J.J. Abrams is the director and all the Star Trek films he directed were amazing so for sure this movie won't disappoint," he said.

The websites and movie line did not list any other showtimes. As of Tuesday, online information said that the theater will be open throughout the weekend to premiere the two listed shows.

Local sources separately said that there is a possibility of the theaters opening before this Friday.

Movie listings can be viewed at www.regmovies.com. ***(With Mark Rabago)***

'Dynasty decision intended to restructure financials'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The administration of Gov. Eloy S. Inos sees the filing of Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition by the owner of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino as a company decision that would allow it to remodel its financial and organizational structures.

Asked for comment about Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investments Ltd.'s bankruptcy petition, the Inos administration, through press secretary Ivan A. Blanco, said yesterday that HKE's move would allow Tinian Dynasty's business to continue while maintaining a level of solvency to meet its financial obligations.

Blanco said it is their understanding that HKE's board of directors recently filed the Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition in federal court due to insufficient assets to meet is liabilities.

Blanco said various debt repayment plans may include debt reduction or an extension of the debt repayment period.

"Of course, the corporation will have to enter into negotiations with its creditors to determine the best financial and organizational structure to clear the debts," he said.

Blanco said this bankruptcy filing allows the corporation to continue to operate its hotel and casino businesses while working toward satisfying its financial obligations.

According to HKE's petition, the company has total assets of $55.2 million but total liabilities of $258.5 million.

Among the creditors listed as having priority unsecured claims is the CNMI Treasury, which has a total claim of $225,671.31. The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. also claims for payment of past due utilities in the amount of $649,180.84 and about $180,000 in estimated October 2015 utilities.

HKE counsel Timothy H. Bellas earlier disclosed that one of their first priorities will be to ask the bankruptcy court for permission to pay the unpaid salaries of Tinian Dynasty employees and unpaid federal and local taxes.

DPA CAR MART
We're buying '97 & Up used cars!
Transaction only within 30 mins.
Call 287-8688/235-8688 or visit DPA CAR MART in San Antonio
website: dpacarmart.wix.com/cars

BUSINESS FOR SALE
POKER GAME ROOM WITH GOOD LOCATION
Garapan, Beach Road
For more information please contact 285-3399 or 285-6899

Agape's FREE Math Tutoring!!!
When: 6-8 pm on weekdays
Where: Agape Christian School
What: The Agape Math Warriors are going to contribute their math advantage to the community
Who: First 30 Elementary Middle School students who get C or lower in Math
What to bring: Pencil, eraser, scratch paper, and school math textbook
If you are interested
Please contact Ms. Claire Song at (670)989-6699, or email us at agapemathtutoring@gmail.com, or you can come to Agape Christian School to register anytime.
IT'S FREE!!!!!
"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5
Sponsored by Modern Office Supply, Joeten Enterprises and Pacific Islands Club. More sponsors needed.

We speak ACA, FUTA, FICA and SUTA, so you don't have to speak IRS.
What you don't know can hurt you. We partner with industry leaders Sanford Technology Group, Ceridian Employer Service and ADP to provide accurate, efficient payroll services.
PAYROLL PLUS
- Local customer service team
- Convenient phone-in or online data entry
- Mobile app
- Sealed printed checks or direct deposits
- Payroll tax filing service
Sign up by 12/31/15 and receive:
- FHB set up fee – waived
- Additional discounts by payroll providers
For more information, stop by any branch and see a Customer Service Representative.
First Hawaiian Bank
IT ALL STARTS WITH YES
Gualo Rai Branch, Gualo Rai Commercial Center, Middle Road • Tel: (670) 235-3090 Fax: (670) 235-3094
Oleai Branch, Oleai Center, Beach Road Chalan Laulau • Tel: (670) 234-6559 Fax: (670) 236-8936
Must be a new First Hawaiian Bank Payroll Plus account. Certain restrictions apply. Member FDIC

269 to graduate at UOG commencement on Dec. 20

The University of Guam will recognize 269 prospective graduates during fall 2015 Commencement Ceremonies at 2pm on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, at the UOG Calvo Field House.

Of the expected graduates, 192 will receive undergraduate degrees and 77 will receive graduate degrees. The combined 269 graduates is the highest for any fall commencement in the university's history.

» MSNBC and NBC News anchor Richard Lui is commencement speaker

Richard Lui, journalist and current news anchor for MSNBC and NBC News, will be the commencement speaker. He was also an anchor for CNN Worldwide and has the distinction of being the first Asian American male to anchor a daily, national cable news show in the U.S.

His reporting has focused on politics, covering every national election since 2004. Lui contributes as a columnist for *USA Today, Politico, Huffington Post, The Seattle Times* and others.

Before journalism, Lui spent 15 years with Fortune 500 and tech companies. At Citibank, he co-founded and patented a payments backbone system, and he was a management consultant at Mercer for an IBM JV. He has held executive roles in environmental manufacturing and data recovery. He currently sits on both for-profit and not-for-profit boards. He is also working with a Palo Alto artificial intelligence company on how to leverage its technology in the humanitarian and not-for-profit space.

Lui

He is an alumnus of City College of San Francisco, University of California Berkeley, and the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

For more information about fall 2015 Commencement Ceremonies, visit www.uog.edu. ***(UOG)***

JON PEREZ

Alter City Group chief executive officer Edvon Sze, fourth from right, joins other ACG officers, the Tinian delegation, and Commonwealth Development Authority officials for a group photo after submitting their Qualifying Certificate application yesterday at the CDA office in San Jose.

ACG

From Page 1

It was not immediately learned what type of tax breaks Alter City Group is applying for and the total amount of the incentives they want.

Sze said the QC filing shows that Alter City Group is serious with its investment on Tinian. The Macau-based company is a major investor on Tinian.

"This is a clear step in ACG's plans to start the project on Tinian," Sze told *Saipan Tribune.*

Alter City Group is planning to build two hotel complexes, two casinos, six service apartment complexes, villas, a world-class 18-hole golf course and club house, a water park, a cultural center and museum for its multibillion-dollar Plumeria Golf and Casino Resort.

Alter City Group plans to build the Plumeria project on a 154-hectare land located at the scenic Puntan Diablo Cove.

The company was allowed to operate a casino on Tinian after the 19th CNMI Legislature passed Public Law 19-23 that allows investors to build and operate casinos on Tinian and Rota.

Carline B. Sablan said the CDA would have 90 days to review and come up with a recommendation whether to accept or reject the application, which they would submit to the Governor's Office.

"Once CDA certifies an application complete, it has 90 days to formulate a recommendation to the governor," said Sablan in an email to the *Saipan Tribune.*

"The governor, in turn, has 45 days from receipt of CDA's recommendation to act. Applicants are asked to allow four to five months for the process to run its course," she added.

Senate vice president Francisco M. Borja, and Sens. Francisco Q. Cruz and Jude U. Hofschneider, and Rep. Edwin P. Aldan were also present during yesterday's submission at CDA.

FSM

From Page 1

their livelihoods.

"Many FSM citizens have made the CNMI their home with their families and have contributed tremendously to the social and economic development of the CNMI," said Blanco yesterday when asked for comment about the resolution.

However, since this is a matter between sovereign nations, Inos and acting governor Ralph DLG Torres are not in a position to comment on the specifics of the matter, he said.

The resolution, introduced by Sens. Peter Christian (Pohnpei), Robson Romolow (Chuuk), Bonsiano F. Nethon (Chuuk), and former FSM speaker Isaac Figir (Yap), calls for President Manny Mori to terminate the Compact of Free Association between FSM and the United States by 2018.

The resolution noted that, "the recent words and deeds of United States policymakers suggest they view the Amended Compact as an act of charity by the United States rather than a treaty between two sovereign nations."

The resolution accuses the United States of abusing its majority role in the U.S.-FSM Joint Economic Management Committee to force through resolutions contrary to the FSM's interests, such as "unilaterally making drastic cuts to the funding of the College of Micronesia-FSM without prior discussion or consultation with leaders of the Federated States of Micronesia." The FSM lawmakers were also angered by a recommendation from the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security consider establishing a pre-screening process and requiring advanced permission for prospective travelers from FSM and other Freely Associated States to enter the United States.

'Labor issues'

According to Senate Committee on Foreign and Federal Relations chair Sen. Arnold Palacios (R-Saipan), the federal government needs to step in and deal with the issue as stated in the original Compact agreement.

For the FSM community on Saipan, he said, "I can see the possibility of labor issues in the CNMI as we will be unable to tap easily into that labor pool."

Palacios said the matching of federal funds for medical and housing needs will be affected, saying that there'll be many implications, including FSM citizens being considered foreigners, therefore complicating immigration issues and an eventual loss of opportunities.

In terms of national security and military access, he said the United States has a lot to lose if the agreement ends in 2018, allowing FSM the freedom to decide or give access in their specific region in Micronesia to other military organizations in the world.

Delegate Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) pointed out, though, that the resolution, introduced on Nov. 19, has still not been voted on or adopted by the FSM Congress.

"I believe that the Compacts are an important national security and economic agreement between the U.S. and FAS that provide mutual benefits for our nations. Additionally many FAS citizens who have migrated to Guam contribute to our community and add to the vibrancy of our island," Bordallo said. "…It is important to find ways to balance our relationship with the FAS with the concerns that have been raised by local policymakers…[in] affected jurisdictions."

Since the implementation of the Compacts of Free Association with the Freely Associated States (FSM, Palau, and Marshall Islands), many citizens from these nations have legally migrated to Guam and Hawaii for health, education, and work purposes.

Based on Census 2000, out of 4,091 FAS citizens in the CNMI, 3,990 live on Saipan.

Under current federal law, annual mandatory funding for Compact Impact Aid is capped at $30 million. The funding is shared between Hawaii, Guam, the CNMI, and American Samoa.

Compact Impact discretionary funding averages around $3 million, according to the Office of Insular Affairs.

Since the early 2000s, FSM have been receiving and developing relations with the government of the People's Republic of China for the FSM Trust Fund. In 2006, China approved a $25-million loan for Pacific allies, which included FSM assistance with Internet access as well as $2.5 million in grant assistance.

HUNTER

From Page 1

decisions of our current leaders can get me feeling hopeless. It is refreshing to watch this next generation stand up and speak out and take action. They are setting a new example. They are breaking the mold," he said.

Hunter said that SYP possesses the kind of courage needed to lead the CNMI community forward, recollecting the tumultuous times and changes the CNMI has long endured.

"Myself, and those before me, have failed the CNMI. We overlooked all the incredibly unique resources we have. We opted for short-term gain. We failed to properly plan. We have failed to foster entrepreneurship. We have failed to preserve our natural resources. We have squandered public funds. We have abused our positions of power when given the reins. We have failed to plan and therefore we currently have a plan of failure. Have we directly done all that? Perhaps not but we have failed to stop it. At times we feigned ignorance. We have turned a blind eye. We have cowered to those in the community who bully the masses into silence and apathy. We have hushed our voice. It is up to the SYP leaders to change that," he said.

Emphasizing the need to recognize and realize the true potential of the islands and to set a proper plan and vision for these islands, Hunter quoted the late businessman Tony Pellegrino, who used to say "we have diamonds beneath our feet…In the end, it is the members of SYP that give me hope for these beautiful islands I call home."

According to Hunter, CORE is still working on providing comprehensive relief to survivors of Soudelor and, as a network partner with Commonwealth Advocate for Recovery Efforts or CARE, they are working with the American Red Cross NMI Chapter's Immediate Disaster Case Management Team. This week they continue to discuss what unmet needs have been prioritized and how CORE can assist. They are also focusing on their work with the Medical Reserve Corp and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for medical clinics in 2016 similar to what they have done in the past.

The community award, along with other service activities, are one many SYP goals "to embrace an inclusive and powerful definition of professionalism and leadership that drives civic and cultural responsibility and community service." Becoming a Saipan Chamber of Commerce stakeholder, building an authentic network and voicing ideas about important issues that affect the island are promoted within the group.

Cyberstalking suspect kept detained pending trial

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy granted yesterday the U.S. government's motion for the continued detention of Brian T. Palacios, who is facing a charge of cyberstalking.

Kennedy said there is clear and convincing evidence that no combination of conditions will assure the safety of other persons and the community if Palacios is released pending trial.

Kennedy said the nature and circumstances of the offense include threats of violence against specific persons, including the suspect's relatives living within a mile of his residence.

The judge said the weight of the evidence includes Facebook posts and a confession, as well as Palacios' history and character, which include a conviction of riot.

Kennedy noted that Palacios has a history of alcohol abuse, with two convictions for driving while under the influence.

Kennedy also pointed out that the suspect has no recent history of regular employment.

The judge also considered the nature and seriousness of the danger to the witnesses in the case.

Palacios' court-appointed counsel, Steven Pixley, noted that the motion for protective order was not addressed but Kennedy said she will allow Pixley to respond in writing and will either set the matter for a hearing or that she will just rule on the motion and not set a date for a hearing at this time.

Palacios was later remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshal.

Special assistant U.S. attorney Mohammad Khatib appeared via telephone on behalf of the U.S. government.

In the U.S. government's motion for protective order, Khatib said the documentary evidence contains large quantity of privacy-protected information that would be difficult or time-consuming to redact.

According to the indictment, between April 19 and Sept. 15, 2015, Palacios used the Internet to harass and threaten the victim, placing that person and the spouse in fear of death and of serious bodily injury and causing emotional distress to the victim and the victim's spouse.

Palacios pleaded not guilty to cyberstalking, the first such criminal case filed in the CNMI. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

UFO presents 'Paskong Pinoy' on Sunday

The United Filipino Organization will be holding its traditional *Paskong Pinoy* (Filipino Christmas) on Sunday, Dec. 20, from 10am to 9pm at the Marianas Business Plaza grounds in Susupe.

The event has been held annually since UFO was formed in 1*997. The group* will be holding a meeting today to finalize the details of the ***annual event.***

UFO president Bong Malasarte said the event is open to all who want to join them in celebrating the holiday season.

The UFO has lined up various activities, contests, and entertainment numbers for the crowd to enjoy in the event co-sponsored by IT&E and LBC.

Kids will get the chance to participate in different games, Christmas art making contest, and gift-giving.

The Christmas singing competition starts at 2pm with the choral, solo, and battle of the bands. Entries for the Christmas lantern-making contest will also be judged on the same day.

The announcement of all the winners will be done after the battle of the bands.

The Deal or No Deal game show will serve as the highlight of Paskong Pinoy, where one lucky participant will have a chance to win $2,000. (Jon Perez)

Apatang is confirmed to Civil Service board

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate confirmed the appointment of Valeria Q. Apatang as a member of the Civil Service Commission to represent Rota during a regular session on that island Friday.

The Senate confirmed Apatang's appointment nearly three months after Gov. Eloy S. Inos nominated her to the post in September.

In his nomination letter, Inos stated that if Apatang's nomination is confirmed, she will serve a six-year term that will start on the date of her confirmation.

"I am confident that Ms. Apatang is qualified and will be an asset on the important commission," he said.

Other members of the commission are CSC chair Herman "HR" Guerrero; Felicitas "Tee" P. Abraham, vice chair from Saipan; Catalina Tebit, also from Saipan; Charles M. Calvo; and Arsene Borja, from Tinian. One Saipan seat remains vacant.

Apatang earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and associate degree in Human Services Management from the University of Phoenix. She used to be the administrative officer and program coordinator at the Office on Aging on Rota as well as administrative assistant at the Office of the Mayor.

The Civil Service Commission is composed of seven members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. Six members serve a term of six years, in such manner that the term of one member expires each year, and one member serving a term of four years expiring concurrently with the term of the governor.

Comments sought for Guam aircraft hangar project

PEARL HARBOR—Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific announced yesterday the start of a 45-day public comment period for the determination of effects of Military Construction Project P-601: Aircraft Maintenance Hangar No. 2 (PA Memo No. 1).

The comment deadline is Jan. 28, 2016 (Chamorro Standard Time).

This project proposes the construction of an aircraft maintenance hangar at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. Project works include the construction of an aviation maintenance hangar with high bay spaces, crew and equi***pment spaces, and administrative spaces.***

The information can be found on the NAVFAC Pacific Cultural Information website at http://go.usa.gov/kZWG. (Please note the URL is case sensitive).

Those without Internet access can obtain a hard copy of the PA Memos from the Guam Historic Resources Division, located at 490 Chalan Palasyo, Agana Heights, 96910 (in the Department of Parks and Recreation Office). (USN)

SANTA AND HIS HELPERS ARE COMING TO T GALLERIA
SHARE THE HOLIDAY CHEER AND MAKE HOLIDAY MEMORIES BY TAKING PHOTOS WITH SANTA AND HIS HELPERS.
SANTA'S SCHEDULE
FROM NOW THRU CHRISTMAS
6 PM to 9 PM
T GALLERIA
BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN MP 96950 | 1.670.233.6602 | 1030 AM TO 1030 PM | TGALLERIA.COM

WHERE CAN YOUR CAREER TAKE YOU?

DFS

EXCITING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH DFS SAIPAN

WE ARE LOOKING FOR DYNAMIC INDIVIDUALS WHO STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE AND VALUE INTEGRITY AND TEAM WORK TO FILL THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS. COMPETITIVE SALARY AND BENEFITS PACKAGES ARE OFFERED. SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES WILL HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF PROFESSIONALISM AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, AND BE VERY COMFORTABLE WORKING COLLABORATIVELY ACROSS TEAMS. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE. LANGUAGE SKILLS IN CHINESE PREFERRED. LUXURY & INTERNATIONAL RETAIL EXPERIENCE A PLUS.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

• 2 TEAM LEADS, REGULAR, FT
• 14 SALES ASSOCIATE, REGULAR, FT

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT & TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION:
VISIT: WWW.DFSGROUP.COM/DFS-CAREERS
CONTACT: ESTHER ADA, HR MANAGER, DFS SAIPAN, .L.P., ESTHER.ADA@DFS.COM, +1 670.236-2510
APPLICATION CLOSING DATE IS DECEMBER 18, 2015. DFS IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

THE TRAVELER'S LUXURY DEPARTMENT STORE

ABU DHABI | AUCKLAND | BALI | CAIRNS | GUAM | HAWAII | HONG KONG | JAKARTA
LOS ANGELES | MACAU | MEDAN | MUMBAI | NEW DELHI | NEW YORK | OKINAWA
PALAU | SAIPAN | SAN FRANCISCO | SINGAPORE | SYDNEY

DFSGROUP.COM

IT&E
Life In Motion

IT&E needs the following positions for the Customer Operations department:

- Universal Service Representative
- Customer Care Assistant
- Systems Specialist

JVA# 1-2015-12: Universal Service Representative

The Universal Service Representative serves as the first line of contact with IT&E customers, receiving and initiating residential, business, government, Internet, and cellular customer contacts by telephone, personal contact and correspondence.

Minimum qualifications:
- High School Graduate with evidence of computer technical education or training;
- Two years of work experience in a customer service oriented business environment

Candidates Must Have:
- computer and customer service experience;
- excellent telephone etiquette and English communication skills;
- logical thought process;
- friendly and outgoing personality;

JVA# 2-2015-12: Customer Care Assistant

The Customer Care Assistant is responsible for providing training, tracking of Operation Results, Entering Payroll, Attendance Monitoring, Employee performance, data entry and record keeping. The Assistant monitors the network to ensure that service levels are met, addresses any customer issues to meet customer expectations, and provides on-call technical support and contact for the Customer Operations escalations. The Assistant uses a combination of profiling, overtime, and shift changes to adjust staffing levels to accommodate revised staffing-need forecasts, marketing rollouts, network upgrades, and unexpected increase in call volumes due to natural or man-made events.

Minimum Qualifications Requirements:
- High School Graduate with evidence of computer technical education or training;
- One year of work experience in a customer service oriented business environment

Candidates must have:
- computer and customer service experience;
- excellent telephone etiquette and English communication skills;
- Data Entry and Record Keeping
- Business Writing
- logical thought process;
- friendly and outgoing personality;

JVA# 3-2015-12: Systems Specialist

The Systems Specialist is responsible for assisting with the maintenance, troubleshooting and installation of personal computers (PC), network, server and telecommunications equipment. The incumbent will apply solutions to resolve technical problems reported by customers and end users, both internal staff and Company clients, through the phone and direct interface.

Minimum Qualification Requirements:
- Associate's degree from an accredited college or university in computer science or related field, or a combination of completion of a technical certificate program and equivalent additional work experience
- Work Experience: Two years progressively responsible experience in computer help desk work

Candidates Must Have:
- Basic principles and practices of office administration, communications and customer service etiquette
- Telecommunications standards and practices
- Personal computer hardware and software installation, repair, testing and troubleshooting
- Microsoft base products, installation and operation
- Local Area Networks (LAN) and Wide Area Networks (WAN) principles
- Basic tenets of good telephone etiquette

Interested candidates must apply online on our website, http://www.ite.net by , December 22, 2015.

As an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer, IT&E provides equal opportunity to all applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, sex/gender, age, religion, veteran status, or disability.
IT&E is a Drug Free Workplace.

OVR seeks comments on state plan

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, will be conducting statewide public forums to solicit comments on the fiscal years 2016-2020 Vocational Rehabilitation Portion of the Unified State Plan.

The public is invited and encouraged to participate in the scheduled public forums. The forum will provide opportunities for public comments on how well services are met and what needs to be strengthened in our State Plan. Let us know how the OVR and SRC can best serve people with disabilities residing in the CNMI by identifying barriers that currently prevent our people with disabilities from getting or keeping jobs and, more importantly, recommend solutions to those barriers. Overall, we appreciate the public's feedback on how the OVR and SRC can work together with our local communities to help people with disabilities to prepare for or maintain competitive integrated employment.

On Tinian, the public forum will be held today, Dec. 16, from 12pm to 1pm, at the Northern Marianas College campus (VTC room).

On Rota and Saipan, the forum will be held on Dec. 22, from 5pm to 6pm, at the NMC campus (VTC room).

The State Plan can also be viewed in its entirety at www.ovrgov.net.

If you require reasonable accommodation (e.g., large print, audio, Braille, etc.) to participate in the public forums, contact Elvira Seman at least two days before the scheduled forums at 322-6537/8; TTY: 322-6449; fax: 322-6548; or email nmidir@ovrgov.net. Alternate formats of the State Plan will be provided upon request. ***(OVR)***

4 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has red-flagged four Saipan beaches and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

Affected sites are Puerto Rico Dump, Hafa-Adai drainage, Smiling Cove Marina, and Garapan Fishing Dock.

Samples collected from these locations contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

DEQ analyzes water samples collected from Saipan's recreational beaches and storm drainage every Tuesday. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

FOA presents *Scrooge*

Friends of the Arts, widely known on the island for their entertaining theatrical productions, are bringing *Scrooge: A Magical Musical Readers Theater* to the Marianas High School Dolphin Theater. Witness Charles Dickens' amazing timeless classic*, A Christmas Carol,* in a magical musical readers theater!

The Friends of the Arts, in association with Rhythm 'N Harmony and the MHS Theatre Club, will help you enjoy exceptional Christmas spirit this holiday season!

Witness the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and how he finds the true meaning of Christmas! Prepare yourselves, however, for the darkness that Scrooge brings with him throughout the story that only the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future can bring to light before time runs out. Experience the cast rock the stage under the direction of Harold Easton, a renowned theatrical member of our community, and Paul Dujua, a talented and brilliant musical theatric!

This production will be held on two dates with three available show times: Dec. 19 at 7pm and Dec. 20 at 3pm and 7pmTickets start at $4 for students, $6 for FOA members, and $8 for adults! Contact Frank Gibson at 287-7476 for reservations and more information. ***(FOA)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-16-002

Typhoon Soudelor Disaster Recovery Project - CUC Central Warehouse Repairs

The Office of the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for repairs at CUC Central Warehouse in Lower Base, Saipan. As this project is time sensitive, contractors shall ensure that they have a good understanding of the project prior to making their bid proposal to avoid protracted contract discussion that will result in a successful expedited contract award to the selected Offeror.

The Scope of Work and Solicitation Package will be emailed upon request, by CUC Procurement & Supply Office from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, except on government observed holidays, **until December 15, 2015**. Prospective proponents for this RFP must register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division no later than 2:00 p.m. on December 15, 2015 in order to be considered.

A **mandatory Pre-proposal Conference** will be conducted at the Warehouse Building in Lower Base, Saipan on **December 15, 2015 at 10:00 a.m., ChST.** Immediately after the conference, Site Visits to Warehouse facility will be arranged. Proposers shall familiarize themselves with the site conditions prior to submitting the proposal.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC Central Warehouse Repairs, CUC-RFP-16-002" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **December 31, 2015 at 10:00 AM,** local time. Submissions, in PDF, must also be emailed to the addresses as noted in the RFP. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A Proposal Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. *A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying

labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Proponents are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proponents due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of proponents' preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract.

Proponents shall be accorded fair and equal treatment. There shall be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proponents.

This Request for Proposal does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: https://marianaslabor.net/. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 a.m. local time on **December 21, 2015,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, CUC P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950 via email: manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Assistant, Procurement Division via email: marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org CUC will respond to any questions and clarifications only to prospective proposers who have registered for the solicitation with CUC procurement division.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the Request for Bid in the interest of the Corporation. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

JOHN RIEGEL
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS
- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer.
Qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Judge recuses self from lawyer's disbarment case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona has recused herself from hearing Stephen C. Woodruff's request for the federal court to decline imposing on him the local courts' order disbarring him from the practice of law in the CNMI.

In an order on Monday, Manglona said her husband, John A. Manglona, is a justice of the CNMI Supreme Court and sat on the panel that decided Woodruff's appeal.

Manglona said the federal judge who hears Woodruff's motion will decide whether to impose on Woodruff the same disbarment order imposed by the CNMI Supreme Court. This process is called "reciprocal discipline."

"In order to avoid a reasonable appearance of partiality, I must recuse myself in this matter," Manglona said.

She directed the federal court's clerk to reassign the case to a designated judge or refer the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for reassignment.

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman ordered Woodruff's disbarment in June 2013 for 44 violations of the Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Woodruff appealed, asking the CNMI Supreme Court to reverse Wiseman's order. The CNMI Supreme Court affirmed Wiseman's order last week.

On Monday, Woodruff informed the federal court about the CNMI high court's decision. He also filed a motion, requesting the federal court to enter an order declining to impose reciprocal discipline.

In his motion, Woodruff said if the question of reciprocal discipline is not now decided in his favor, he suggests that proceedings in federal court be stayed for 120 days in order to allow him to seek rehearing in the CNMI Supreme Court or review in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Woodruff said justice pro tem Herbert Soll, who issued a dissenting opinion, was concerned about the "drastic" consequences of affirming the Superior Court's default disbarment order "based on unproven allegations."

Woodruff said it is uncontroverted that there was absolutely no proof by disciplinary counsel of anything at all in the Superior Court proceedings.

» Woodruff asks federal court to decline imposing disbarment, stay proceedings

"There was nothing but representations of disciplinary counsel, who was ultimately disqualified from prosecuting the case," he said.

Woodruff said reciprocal discipline is appropriate only where the discipline imposed is supported by evidence sufficient to satisfy the duty of the court to exercise the care due such questions.

"Since there was no actual evidence at all of misconduct in the Superior Court, there was insufficient proof of misconduct, and reciprocal discipline should be declined," he said.

Woodruff said imposition of reciprocal discipline would impose a grave injustice on him.

He cited Soll's statement in his dissent that "disbarment is a drastic remedy that deprives attorneys of their livelihood."

Woodruff said he has been unable to practice in CNMI courts for more than three years now since interim suspension was imposed in 2013.

He cited another Soll statement that "assuming the truth of the allegations, which generally regard an inattention to his legal practice, Woodruff may be deserving of an opportunity to rehabilitate himself."

Woodruff said reciprocal discipline would deny him the ability to demonstrate that whatever problems may have existed in his practice previously have been corrected.

He said there were many due process violations in the CNMI Bar Disciplinary Committee and Commonwealth courts relative the disciplinary proceedings against him.

He believes that the CNMI Supreme Court deprived him of due process of law when it arbitrarily struck 38 percent of his brief, including 74 percent of his argument.

Woodruff also believes he was denied due process when procedural motions he brought—of a type regularly granted in the ordinary case—were denied.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Birthday greetings going out to Hank Jr. P. Arurang, better known as "Kuma," who is celebrating his birthday today. May the Lord above continue to shower blessings on you every day. We will always love and care for you. Greetings come from your family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CASH 4
GOLD & SILVER
FREE COIN VALUE ESTIMATES!
STEVEN R. CONNOR
Cell: (670) 484-8971
SRCinSaipan@gmail.com

isla
Realty Management
a locally owned company

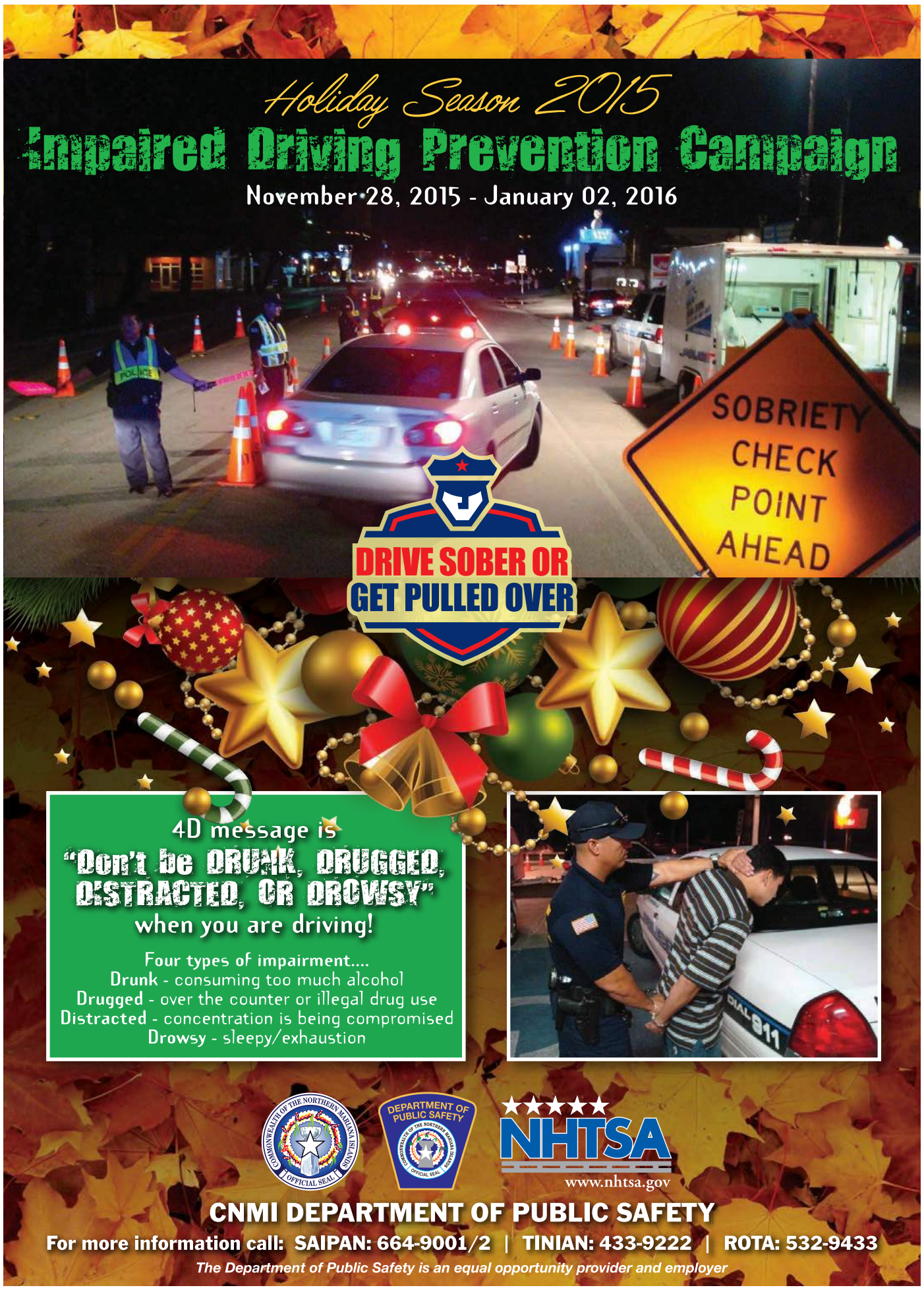
A Real Estate Company that Represent and Understand Your Land Value

Looking for properties to purchase or lease.
Local Investors.

• Beach front properties • View properties
• Level open space properties • Downtown Garapan
• Hillside properties

ISLA REALTY MANAGEMENT
CONTACT & LOCATION:
MITA Travel Office
Beach Road, Garapan
Contact: (670) 234-7888/483-1726 or
Email: islarealtysaipan@gmail.com

Following Information/Documents Required
Property Map/As Built Map/ Total Land Area
If available for existing building showing exact location & building details
Owner Title Information
Owner Asking Price


Holiday Season 2015
Impaired Driving Prevention Campaign
November 28, 2015 - January 02, 2016
SOBRIETY CHECK POINT AHEAD
DRIVE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER
4D message is
"Don't be DRUNK, DRUGGED, DISTRACTED, OR DROWSY"
when you are driving!
Four types of impairment....
Drunk - consuming too much alcohol
Drugged - over the counter or illegal drug use
Distracted - concentration is being compromised
Drowsy - sleepy/exhaustion
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov
CNMI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
For more information call: SAIPAN: 664-9001/2 | TINIAN: 433-9222 | ROTA: 532-9433
The Department of Public Safety is an equal opportunity provider and employer

China's largest online travel website visits for video shoot

Qunar, China's leading mobile and online travel platform, recently visited Saipan for a weeklong video shoot to introduce travel tips, preferred attractions, and local culture.

The website publishes five times each week to travel lovers and receives 83 million-plus views each month. The videos about and photos of Saipan will be released in late December 2015.

"The number of independent Chinese travelers continues to rise, and many of them book their travel online or have found travel tips about the CNMI on Mafengwo, Qunar, Ctrip and other booking websites," said Marianas Visitors Authority marketing manager Bruce Bateman. "They are seeking authentic local experiences and want quality time enjoying our beautiful beaches. Many of our previous Chinese visitors have also provided beautiful pictures and useful information online to share with other travel lovers."

The MVA helped coordinate the media FAM, which included tours of historic and scenic sites in Marpi and along Beach Road. Other activities included snorkeling at the Grotto, a discovery flight, skydiving, a submarine tour, a Let's Go Tour UTV tour, trolling, golf at Laolao Bay Golf Resort, and a driving tour. Eateries visited were Isla Cafe, Tony Roma's, and Fiesta Resort & Spa's cultural dinner show. ***(MVA)***

CHRISTMAS CHEER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bridge Capital, LLC helps bring Christmas in the Marianas. As a Silver Sponsor for this ongoing event, John K. Baldwin's team is still focused on CNMI's recovery from Typhoon Soudelor. Bridge Capital LLC chief operating officer Jody Jordahl hands a $1,500 check to KKMP Foundation president Rosemond B. Santos and Gary Sword.

Korea's No. 1 golf channel films on Saipan

Korea's No. 1 golf channel, SBS Golf, wrapped up a four-day shoot on Saipan over the weekend with name brand Titleist. The shoot featured five professional golfers and amateurs at the Greg Norman-designed LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort.

In addition to shooting practice sessions, participant interviews, and games at the picturesque course, the familiarization tour also filmed at scenic and historic sites in Marpi including the Korean Peace Memorial and Bird Island, the award-winning Managaha, and in the downtown tourist district of Garapan.

"LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort is an excellent example of the extraordinary courses the Northern Marianas has to offer golfers on Saipan and Rota. The Marianas Visitors Authority was pleased to help arrange this filming by SBS Golf and Titleist," said MVA marketing manager Bruce Bateman. "We expect this coverage to entice even more golfers and tournaments to the NMI."

LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort features two 18-hole championship courses overlooking its namesake bay on the Pacific Ocean. ***(MVA)***

COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 500237
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 1 (670) 233-1857 • Fax: 1 (670) 233-1856
Email: info@cnmicasinocommission.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, through the Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission"), hereby give notice that the Commission has scheduled a meeting on Wednesday, December 23, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at the Commission's Office (Conference Room) at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai, Saipan.

The following Agenda will be discussed:

- **I. PRELIMINARIES:**
  - A. Call to Order
  - B. Roll Call
  - C. Adoption of Agenda
  - D. Adoption of Minutes: November 13, 2015
- **II. REPORTS:**
  - A. Report by the Chairman
  - B. Report by the Executive Director
- **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- **IV. OLD BUSINESS:**
  - A. Public Law #19-24
  - B. UNLV International Gaming Institute Training Seminar
- **V. NEW BUSINESS:**
  - A. Casino Commission FY2016 Budget
  - B. Adoption of Casino Junket Operator License Application Form
- **VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**
- **VII. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**
- **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session. In addition, the Commission may extend its official meeting for another day if necessary.

Juan M. Sablan
Chairman

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-DCCA/NAP-021

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: DECEMBER 29, 2015 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

'FY2016 CLEANING SERVICES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIR – N.A.P. DIVISION"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGECY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ **LAURA T. OGUMORO**
SECRETARY OF DCCA

/S/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: RFP16-COTA/FTA-018

SUBMISSION: DECEMBER 30, 2015 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY (COTA)"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON AFTER **DECEMBER 02, 2015** AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGECY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING WILL BE ON **DECEMBER 18, 2015 AT 10:00 A.M.** AT THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY (COTA) CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR AT THE NMI RETIREMENT FUND BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL IF, IN IT'S OPINION TO DO SO, WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

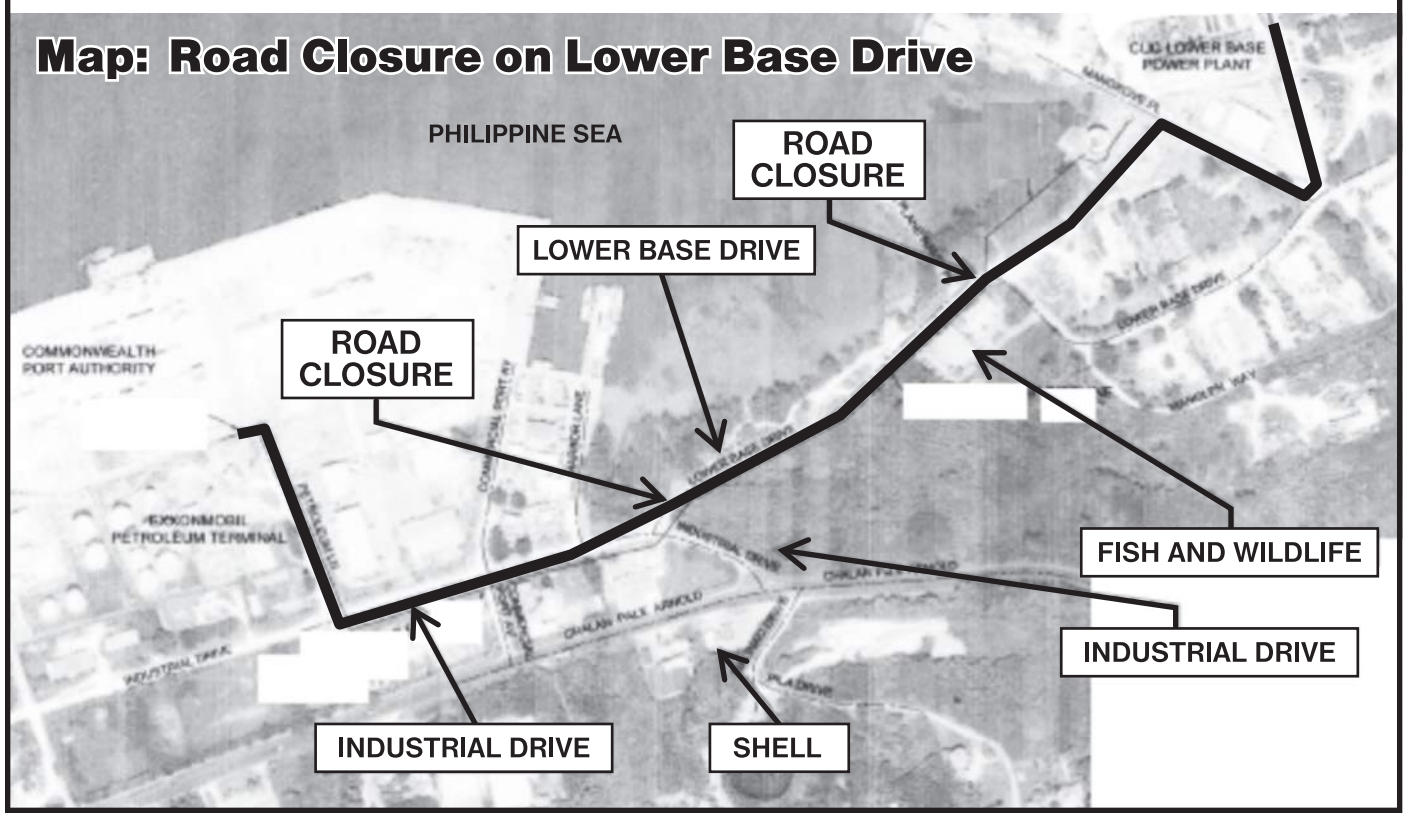
/S/ **ALFREDA P. CAMACHO**
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

/S/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

ROAD CLOSURE PUBLIC NOTICE

Lower Base Drive will be closed between Fish and Wildlife and the intersection of Lower Base Drive with Industrial Drive for pipeline installation from Saturday December 19 at 6 a.m. through Sunday December 20 at 10 p.m. See attached Map for areas of closure.

The work is being performed by Gilbane Federal. Contact Eric Yatabe at 670-898-2598 for any questions.



COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
San Jose Village
P.O. Box 502149 Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. Nos.: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245
Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Email Address: administration@cda.gov.mp
Website: www.cda.gov.mp

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION
December 18, 2015

Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to **loan documents**, the Commonwealth Development Authority ("CDA") shall auction off to the highest bidder **used airplane, parts and accessories and airline operation supplies.**

The auction shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The items are being sold **"AS IS"** and **"WHERE IS"**;
2. The items are being sold **WITHOUT WARRANTY** of any type;
3. The public auction will be held at the **CPA Freedom Air Hangar on Friday, December 18, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.**;
4. Terms of the sale are cash, certified check or credit card (Visa and Mastercard only; a 2% fee will be charged on credit card transactions); and
5. CDA reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to withdraw this notice and postpone the sale from time to time.

CDA is attempting to collect a debt and any payments received will be used for that purpose. Any interested party or person may contact Ms. Abby Atalig or Ms. Marie Coleman, Loan Officers, CDA at 234-7145 extensions 304 and 307 for further information. Inspection of items will be announced at a later date. Failure to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer. All sales are final.

Dated this 25th day of November, 2015

Commonwealth Development Authority
/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

High court review sought for Americans denied recognition as US citizens

Does Congress have the power to switch the Constitution's guarantee of birthright citizenship on and off in U.S. territories?

This is one of the questions a group of Americans denied recognition as U.S. citizens because they were born in American Samoa plan to ask the Supreme Court when they file their petition for certiorari in the coming weeks. Joining them in *Tuaua v. United States* to make the case that the Constitution›s guarantee of birthright citizenship cannot be restricted by Congress is prominent Supreme Court attorney Theodore B. Olson, who has argued over 60 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Earlier today, Olson filed a motion to the court on behalf of the *Tuaua* petitioners requesting a 30-day extension to file a petition for certiorari seeking Supreme Court review of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit's June decision holding that birthright citizenship is not a "fundamental right" in U.S. territories. The motion, which includes an overview of the arguments and issues in the case, is available here.

» Theodore B. Olson joins case seeking recognition of birthright citizenship in US territories

"I am a proud, passport-carrying American, was born on U.S. soil, and signed up for the draft during the Vietnam War—yet the federal government will not recognize me as a U.S. citizen. I know that's wrong, and I hope the Supreme Court will agree it's also unconstitutional," said Leneuoti Tuaua, lead plaintiff in *Tuaua v. United States*.

Three of the five *Tuaua* plaintiffs are veterans; American Samoa has among the highest rates of U.S. military service in the nation, with casualty rates in Iraq and Afghanistan more than seven times the national average.

"The text and history of the citizenship clause definitively show that the Constitution's guarantee of birthright citizenship applies in states and territories alike," said Olson, who in 2008 wrote a letter with Harvard professor Laurence Tribe defending the eligibility of John McCain to run for President as a "natural-born citizen" based on his birth in a U.S. possession, among other reasons. "We hope that the Supreme Court will take the case to once again make clear that Congress has no power to turn off or redefine the Constitution's guarantee of birthright citizenship."

"Theodore Olson has a record of standing up for constitutional rights. We are thrilled to have his experience and expertise as we work to help our clients have their day before the Supreme Court," said Neil Weare, who argued the case before the D.C. Circuit, and is president and founder of We the People Project, a non-profit organization that advocates for equal rights and representation for the over 4 million Americans living in U.S. territories.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Leneuoti Tuaua, lead plaintiff in Tuaua v. United States, stands in front of the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.

The D.C. Circuit's June opinion, authored by Judge Janice Rogers Brown and joined by Senior Judges Laurence H. Silberman and David B. Sentelle, held that the meaning of the Citizenship Clause was "ambiguous" as to whether its guarantee of birthright citizenship applied in overseas U.S. territories. The panel's opinion also broadly expanded the reach of the Insular Cases, a series of controversial decisions that have been criticized by First Circuit Judge Juan Torruella as creating a doctrine of "separate and unequal" status for residents of U.S. territories. In doing so, it held that rights recognized as "fundamental" in other parts of the United States need not be recognized as "fundamental" in so-called "unincorporated" U.S. territories, a controversial and unprecedented classification created by the Supreme Court at the turn of the 20th century to apply to newly acquired overseas territories.

"Fundamental constitutional rights should mean the same thing throughout the United States, whether one lives in a state, territory, or the District of Columbia," Weare said.

The *Tuaua* case and the controversial *Insular Cases* doctrine were examined in a recently published book, *Reconsidering the Insular Cases*, which is the result of a major conference sponsored last year at Harvard Law School.

As discussed at Harvard, the Supreme Court explained in 2008 that although "[t]he Constitution grants Congress and the President the power to acquire, dispose of, and govern territory," it does not give them "the power to decide when and where its terms apply." The court's decision in *Boumediene v. Bush* also rejected the idea that "the political branches have the power to switch the Constitution on or off at will," explaining that "[i]t may well be that over time the ties between the United States and any of its territories strengthen in ways that are of constitutional significance."

"The D.C. Circuit's decision is in tension with recent Supreme Court pronouncements that Congress cannot pick and choose which constitutional rights apply in U.S. territories today. *Tuaua* provides the court an opportunity to review these important constitutional questions, which affect the lives of more than 4 million Americans who live in U.S. territories," Olson said.

A recent mini-documentary examined the impact the inferior status of "non-citizen national" status has had on the American Samoan community in Los Angeles—the largest in the continental United States—who are denied the right to vote and even access to certain jobs, even as they are expected to pay the same taxes as other Americans. Loa Pele Faletogo, president of the L.A.-based Samoan Federation of America, a plaintiff in the case, explained, "We hope the Supreme Court will recognize our right to citizenship. Otherwise the only way thousands of American Samoans living in Los Angeles and other communities will be able to vote is to naturalize, which with a nearly $700 fee and a test on English and civics, amounts to a poll tax and literacy test all rolled into one."

HBO's *Last Week Tonight* with John Oliver also examined this injustice in a segment that was cited by the Ninth Circuit for its sharp critique of any continued reliance on the Insular Cases to deny equal rights in U.S. territories.

If plaintiffs' motion is granted, their petition for certiorari will be due on Monday, Feb. 1, 2016. A decision by the Supreme Court on whether it will take up the case is expected by the end of the term, which ends in June. ***(We the People)***

GCA parents support competitions

Grace Christian Academy's No. 1 practice plan for their students for the Primary Grades Forensic Conference is: Practice with my parents every day. GCA acknowledges the partnership of their students' parents as stated in their mission statement, "Grace Christian Academy exists to partner with the home to produce vibrant, confident, and loving students…"

Eucele Pagaduan, who has 3rd grade and Kindergarten 5 children at GCA, supports the PGFC by helping her child memorize and practice her piece at home despite her busy schedule. Her Kinder 5 daughter, Elianne Nerisse Pagaduan, is a consistent winner in all her events since she joined the PGFC competition last November.

Paula Rose Talibong, the only GCA Senior Thespian competitor, won first place in the December qualifying competition. She credited her vocal talent to her dad, Rey Talibong, who has been coaching her since she was young. Rey Talibong is also willing to coach other GCA students in the singing competition.

GCA recognizes the crucial role of parents in helping their child not only in academics, but also in extracurricular activities such as PGFC and Thespian competitions. The teachers and administration of GCA are very thankful for all the support from the parents.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy's December PGFC winners have their picture taken at the library.

GCA is also proud of all their PGFC and Thespian participants and say thank to the teachers, judges, and student volunteers for all their help. Below is the list of all the GCA PGFC and Thespian winners who competed last Dec. 5, 2015, at Green Meadows School.

K-2 DIVISION

K5
Dramatic interpretation
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 3rd Place

Impromptu Speaking C
Llyanna Jaira Manalang, 1st Place

Impromptu Speaking D
Ioane Jude Camacho, 3rd Place
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 5th Place

1ST GRADE
Dramatic interpretation
Maria Sofia Gomez, 1st Place

Duo Interpretation
Aiden Gerard Camacho, 5th Place
Rafael Ablog, 5th Place

Impromptu Speaking C
Min Su Andy Kim, 2nd Place
Marisa Wang, 5th Place

2ND GRADE
Dramatic interpretation
William Matthew Cano, 4th Place

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GCA Senior Thespian first place winner Paula Rose Talibong.

Humorous Interpretation
Earl Jean Pantaleon, 5th Place

Impromptu Speaking A
Nestor Ablog Jr., 2nd Place
Ethan John Quichocho, 4th Place
Earl Jean Pantaleon, 5th Place

Readers Forum Masters B
Azriel Fatialofa, 2nd Place
Rafael Busby, 3rd Place

3-5 DIVISION

3RD GRADE
Humorous Interpretation A
Tae Hee Kim, 2nd Place

Readers Forum A
Kaydence Sasaki, 3rd Place

Readers Forum Masters A
Tae Hee Kim, 2nd Place
Jennifer Woo, 5th Place

Impromptu Speaking A
Moira Grace Ernest, 1st Place
Tae Young Lee, 2nd Place
Julianna Rue Magtalas, 5th Place

4TH GRADE
Impromptu Speaking
Juruel Neilan Magtalas, 2nd Place
Sara Elizabeth Keaton, 4th Place

Readers Forum Masters C
Sara Elizabeth Keaton, 5th Place

5TH GRADE
Dramatic Interpretation
Steven Adriatico, 1st Place

Impromptu Speaking C
Jacob Anthony Camacho DLG, 1st Place
Brandie Matsumoto, 2nd Place
Soleil Lamar, 3rd Place

Duo Interpretation
Soleil Lamar, 1st Place
Hye Jin Elliot, 1st Place

Readers Forum B
Seoni Rae Camacho, 1st Place

Readers Forum Masters B
Steven Adriatico, 1st Place
Matthew Gabriel Ernest, 2nd Place
Ryan Daproza, 5th Place

Readers Forum Masters D
Jacob Anthony Camacho DLG, 1st Place

SENIOR THESPIANS (9th-12th GRADE)

Solo Musical Theater
Paula Rose Talibong, 1st Place

GCA Teacher/Coach
K5 Teacher: Sheryl Joy Prieto
1st Grade Teacher: Rosanna Lopez
2nd Grade Teacher: Miriam Dilse
3rd Grade Teacher: Maria Gerecke
4th Grade Teacher: Tammy Dammer
5th Grade Teacher: Grace Duran
K-2 Coach: Leah Garfil
PGFC coach/coordinator: Esther Manzano
Judges/volunteers: Maria Gerecke, Susanna Gerecke, Beatrice Fatialofa, Leah Garfil, Bel Busby, Bethany Garfil, Minna Ito, Charissa Parco, Laila Portuguez

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXV, Issue No. 249

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Climate change pact is worth celebrating, but it's just a start

Given the grave danger posed by unchecked climate change, it's understandable that concerned citizens worldwide would want to hail the historic carbon-emission deal inked in Paris last weekend. And, in fact, getting consensus from 195 nations with varying levels of economic and political development—let alone environmental consciousness—is a remarkable diplomatic accomplishment. But with climate scientists stating that the nonbinding agreement won't fully solve the problem—even if it's fully implemented—it's clear that the Paris pact is just the beginning, not the end, of global efforts to curb emissions.

The accord acknowledges that updates to the plan will be needed. There is a legal requirement that every five years each country will need to present new emission reduction targets. This is essential in order to reach the stated objective of holding the increase in the average global temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius (about 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). But some scientists suggest that the most devastating climate change impact could be avoided if the increase is at or below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Achieving either of these goals will require advancements in technology and, perhaps more challenging, political will. Transitioning to lower carbon emissions will be difficult and expensive, but it won't be as costly as the economic, political and security upheavals that aggressive global warming would bring.

Developing nations are among those that could be most impacted. That's why it's important that while every country is expected to contribute to the solution, there is a suggested mechanism that may provide funding—up to $100 billion annually, per some suggestions—to help developing nations adapt more renewable sources of energy.

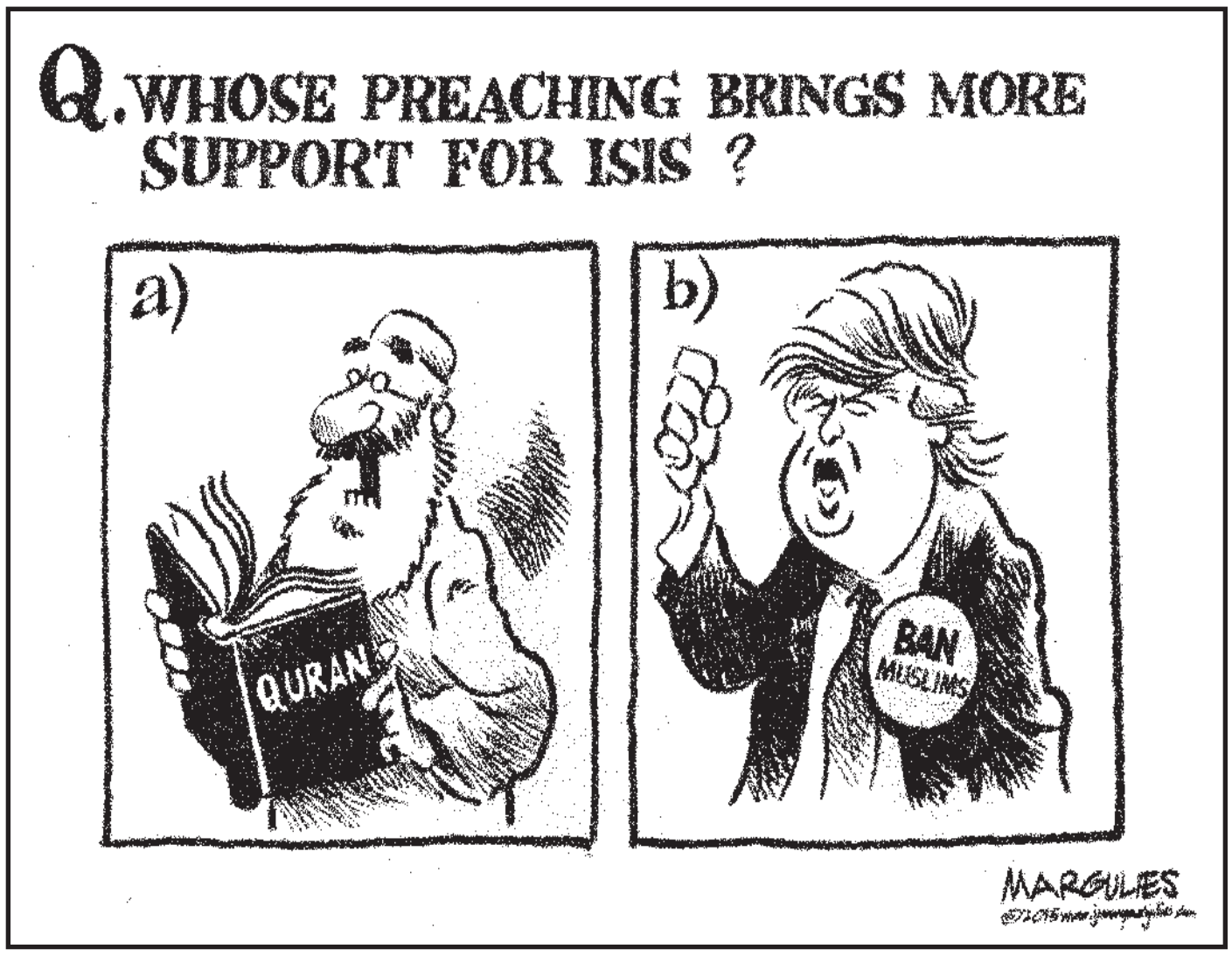
Of course, the top emitters are the U.S. and China, which have the world's top two economies. So it was important that these two nations announced in advance of the conference plans to reduce carbon emissions.

Each nation will have its own unique challenges, however. China is still trying to lift millions out of poverty, and a further economic slowdown from cutting emissions may retard that objective. But the need is apparent, as evidenced by last week's latest first air pollution "red alert" in Beijing, and the central government's rule by fiat will likely mean movement toward its commitment.

U.S. leadership is imperiled, too, since President Barack Obama's incremental progress could be undone by Republicans, especially by 2016 presidential candidates who pledge to undo Obama's executive actions to lower emissions.

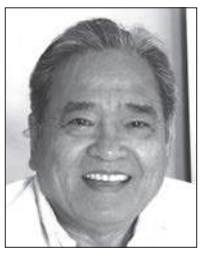
That would be a terrible decision in the short-term but especially in the long-term, because the hard work on combating climate change has only just begun.

(C)2015 STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)



Tasi tours

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

I had always been partial to Tasi Tours, more so when I learned that the impressive apartment complex going up at the corner of Beach Road and Sugar Dock wharf is a Tasi project.

I once was at the south Garapan compound where the tour buses are located along with the office that sells tickets to Mañagaha. I brought my wife, stepson, and a guest to the island off the lagoon a few months back so I was led to purchase the tickets at the "local" resident's window at reduced price.

A partner in a Language Studio in Shenyang, Liaoning and I have packaged a language immersion tour on Saipan; Chinese learners join an ecologically friendly tour of the island as well as get to speak English on a "hear, repeat" method. Since English is a phonetic language, we want the learners to train their ears to hear the language spoken at the closest English speaking place rather than the customary academic recognition of words that comes from learning characters (Hanzi) the Chinese way.

The tour part intentionally relies on existing businesses. We patronize established commercial concerns that provide transport, accommodations and meals, and my associates handle the contact with human resource. As a former schoolteacher, my specialty is pedagogy, how people learn from experience, retain and remember what they learn by putting up signs and symbols, words and numbers as handles, and teach what they learned to others in the style of discourse known to both sides. It's a stone thrown into the middle of a pool causing ripples of waves, an appropriate analogy.

The dependence on existing local businesses came when in the discussion on whether to bring in a Shanxi photographer with his whole set of digital cameras to do wedding pictures was discouraged until I found out how saturated photography-taking business was on island. To be sure, wedding pictures are a big item among Chinese tourists for the "face" it provides when the copies are prominently displayed on walls in the homes, but the practice has deteriorated to just the level of rented attire.

I recently attended a workshop at one of the resort hotels and what was a serene chapel where weddings were held once was turned into a function room, seemingly uncared for as a decorative panel came down while we conducted the workshop. Now, wedding photos are taken for the back home decor without the ceremony.

When still a cleric on island, I refused to perform weddings at hotel chapels for the fee and the photo ops without ensuring that the couple are versed in the implications of the covenant of marriage, to affirm what they already are into anyway—the decision to live together as one unit. The white gown and the tux do not a marriage make; saying and hearing of "I do" does!

Not too long ago, I wrote of manners. I would not mind instructing Tasi personnel on phone etiquette. I called on a Friday thinking of bringing my guest to Mañagaha but I was not sure what tickets to buy. I was an island resident, so were two Chinese nationals, a contract worker (CW), and another waiting for USCIS response to his change of status as a recipient of an approved immigrant status. The third was my China guest.

"Sorry but the office for 'locals' is closed at 3pm," the voice said. It was a quarter of the hour past 5pm. "But you can come and get tourist tickets at $43 each."

I said I was a local, and two in my party qualified for the local price of $24.

"I am sorry, the office for 'local' is closed," the voice repeated. We were not getting anywhere.

Noticing the accent, I asked if the lady was Korean. "I am Japanese. There are no Koreans here," she replied. Ooops. *Wakarimasu.*

"OK, I want to catch the 9:40am ferry to Mañagaha. Can I buy the tickets at the wharf? Tell me what to do," I pleaded.

"You can come to the office now and buy the tickets. They are $43 each," she repeated.

A tropical depression threatened in the south, and my China guest snorkeled enough in the lagoon to last him a lifetime, so the timing was possibly not propitious. Besides, he liked Saipan so much he vowed to bring his immediate family (papa, stepmother and half-sister) on the next trip.

I've done the *Shinkansen* on two occasions, once from Tokyo to Osaka, and the other from Narita to Sapporo on Hokkaido. Transiting in Narita and overnighting close to the airport was taken for granted when traveling from North America to Asia and vice versa. I relished looking down on the scenery coming from Manila or Saipan, and return. Doing Nagasaki, home to a faculty member at Shenyang Aerospace U, is in my to-do list; the land of the rising sun is more than transit point.

I called Tasi Tours hoping for clearer instructions to make the morning ferry and got a second Japanese lady. She was more haughty than the first. So I skipped Mañagaha altogether, keeping it on the list for my colleague's next visit.

Funny. Manners. Even on the phone. It matters. Our Nihonggo sisters could use a few lessons.

Regroup: The die is cast!

For all the posturing that included local participation supporting extending the Marpi land lease to Kan Pacific, the decision by KP to sell its interest ripped and instantly took the wind out of our sails, leaving many dumbfounded.

Not sure how to react to it versus policy in place on lease of public land, etc. I quiz if our land policy is deficient or shortsighted in terms of land disposition, allowing lessees to sell their interest to another investor. Shouldn't lease of public land be limited to permanent business commitment to protect indigenous landowners?

But this would be unduly restrictive and contrary to the capitalism concept that encourages wealth creation or investment. Well, McDonald's lease properties throughout the country for 25 years at a time. There's an increase in fee every five years going to the landowner. If business is thriving at the end of the term it is renewed. Otherwise it just moves elsewhere.

Land leases must be founded on partnership. The sale of interest has turned into a carnival as landowners quiz "what about our interest?" This and other significant issues need thorough discussion. Our goal is to understand and define disposition of indigenous land including the implications of the Qualifying Certificate.

Investors sell their interests making millions doubled down by tax breaks from QC. Both policies require critical review now! It has happened to the Laulau Bay Development when KUMHO sold its interest after securing some $26 million in QC tax breaks. It wipes out any and all initial expenses. Their investment is basically zero.

The Laulau land was appraised as raw property bringing the lease per acre to $3 per square meter. Even with all the improvements done on the property? This I find troubling. Then KUMHO was granted a huge tax break from local QC law. It literally didn't invest anything at all!

Reassessment of land and QC policies is imperative! It requires highly sensitive balancing act to meet the needs of both sides of the equation.

Senators line pockets

While the entire community endures 14 years of stagnant wages and salaries, the Senate has used its infinite wisdom to give themselves an additional $2,500 per month in subsistence allowance. It pans out to $30,000 per year per legislator and taxpayers are on the hook to pay for this excess.

Each heads out the front door with salaries $69,500 per year. We stand by the sideline admiring their negligence to improving our family pocketbooks. It totals some $625,500 in annual income we have to pay as taxpayers. You add the House and it's over $2 million annually. What have they done to deserve lining their pockets with more of our hard-earned taxes? Cement their role as do-nothings?

Future of Medicaid

Quite a number of working folks here have taken advantage of the federally funded health insurance known as Medicaid. Even retirees had to enroll (those that qualify) when their private health premium went up by 40 percent sometime last year.

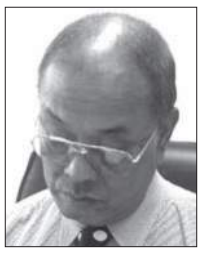
The latest from Capitol Hill (US Senate) is the recent vote to dismantle Obamacare, specifically Medicaid in its entirety. Its days are numbered. The 20 states that have objected to Obamacare's expansion are home free and are more secure fiscally. For the 30 states that fell for the promise of free money from DC, it's a stinging wake-up call.

"Medicaid expansion has been an unmitigated disaster. It has increased government dependency greater and faster than anyone predicted, leaving state taxpayers on the hook for far higher costs than they anticipated," wrote Nicholas Horton, a senior research fellow at the Foundation for Government Accountability.

The point we seem to ignore: Like Puerto Rico we don't pay federal taxes and freebies turn U.S. mainland taxpayers responsibility that would meet serious resistance. We must buckle down to figure out how to salvage those who may eventually be disqualified when the NMI is tasked to absorb a greater share of Medicaid funding.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.



Delusional Obama on ISIS

Obama has relied on his superb oratory powers of persuasion addressing national and foreign policy issues. Unfortunately, he's picked the wrong side of error on ISIS. Though he came out to assuage peace and security in his last speech to the nation, he didn't offer anything credible that resonates and uplifts the half-hearted confidence of Americans everywhere. It was disastrously dishonest given his divorce from reality.

He did nothing but advance the claim that Islamist jihadists are "contained" or their expansion reduced or defeated. The Paris carnage and San Bernadino massacre happened shortly after another shot at avoiding the truth. How could a President with all the available information remain delusional? Why now blame guns over real live terrorists bent on destroying Americans? How sad that he could be inspiring, perplexing but most recently, infuriating.

The lame duck president pitched the same strategy from an old book. There's nothing new. Surprising how he fails listening to the advice of his intelligence and defense people. How do we deal with an unconventional enemy that doesn't wear a uniform? It's no longer conventional war.

Perhaps Obama has purposely eviscerated or deprived essential contents needed by the military, FBI, and other intelligence-gathering outfit to weaken the country. I fear that his detachment would lead to more dangerous events as to outstrip sober decision-making. He tried sophistry to link terrorism upheaval with climate change. What a strange leap of logic!

Not so good a speech

If President Barack Obama had left troops in Iraq, if he had not drawn a red line he then erased, if he had promptly heeded top national security officials advising him early on to arm and train moderate rebels in Syria, would the Islamic State be a lesser concern? Would more people be alive and fewer be refugees? Would Middle East chaos be closer to decency and order?

We can't know for absolute sure, but highly educated, factually based analyses contend convincingly that different policies would have meant less tragedy so far and less peril down the road. Pointing to more recent, lesser flubs, some analyses also make a case for part of what's been amiss: a refusal to face reality.

The president once said, for instance, that the Islamic State was a JV team when it has proved to be powerfully effective in fighting, in building a strong financial base and in recruiting. Because some Islamic State ambitions had been militarily quelled in the Middle East, Obama said the group had been contained, other officials said it had not been and the next day it exercised terror in Europe, killing 130.

Then, apparently thinking U.S. intelligence operations could cover all bases, Obama told Americans to feel safe. That was not long before 14 citizens were killed in San Bernardino, Calif., by two terrorists who said on Facebook that same day that they pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

So, with all of this and more coming at the world, at America, at him, Obama gave a rare Oval Office speech, vainly attempting to explain why he's on the right track when so much is going awry, vowing to destroy the Islamic State with nothing new to make it happen and lecturing the American people about sticking to American values when there is little evidence short of a loony politician that we aren't.

He was right about this much—wanting better screening of certain visas and wanting Congress to authorize military action against the Islamic State as constitutionally demanded if we are to keep fighting. This last item is complicated because a resolution could go further or not as far as some would like, but resolutions can be amended, Congress needs to take responsibility, too, and it's not so bad an idea to abide by rule of law.

Veering into triviality, a favored trick of his, Obama also called for banning semi-automatic assault weapons that are used in just a tiny percentage of criminal shootings and are no more powerful or quick-firing than many other firearms. Even though the chief argument against them is simply that they look scary, a ban wouldn't be the end of the world. What it would be is pointless, seeing as how someone denied one could then obtain an even deadlier gun.

The far bigger issue, of course, is that Obama signaled no significant changes that might make crucial differences in the Islamic State fight. He talked about airstrikes but did not say how they could be used to greater effect. He talked about all our allies who are following us without talking about how we could get them to follow us to the extent of getting some to do far more as we make decisive moves ourselves.

In wrapping the speech up, Obama used a cliche about how "we are on the right side of history," which is another way of saying it's inevitable we win. It isn't. History depends, among other matters, on decisions made along the way, and despite uncertainties, being on target with those decisions is far more likely when you listen to knowledgeable advice, face reality, concede error and change to what works.

By JAY AMBROSE
Tribune News Service

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service. Readers may email him at speaktojay@aol.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What about us?

Wisdom is not prevailing with the renewal of the Mariana Resort lease as the people of the CNMI are being left out of the deal again not knowing what we will get out of it. I wonder how the NMDs feel, knowing that Kan Pacific and Best Sunshine were secretly discussing what they are going to do with your land and even determining how much they are going to give you for the lease renewal. I don't have a stake in this but my wife and children do, so I speak for them. The funny thing is that what Kan Pacific and BSI are doing seems to be legal and I don't blame them as business people who want to strike the best deal for themselves, not for the people. I also don't blame the Legislature for wanting to "clip the wings" of DPL but will that be a perpetual fix when there is still no formal process for future lease renewals?

The problem has been sitting idle since the conception of the lease program because there was never a formal process to renew the lease of any leased government land. Now the people are caught between a rock and a hard place and can't make a move to change the dynamics of the deal. If I'm not mistaken, the primary objective of the government is not to renovate our economy but to build and broaden our economic base that has been devastated by the loss of the garment industry and the declining economies in other countries.

People are just fortunate that Senate floor leader Arnold Palacios is being true to his election promise, which was to "work for us." Everyone with a vested interest in the CNMI should thank him for demanding an investigation because one thing is clear even without an investigation—the people will now get less out of the leased property with no competitive bids on the table so BSI wins but we the people lose! BSI is just better business people than DPL who allowed the people to be sidelined in the deal. DPL never did its homework to create a formal lease renewal procedure for all government lands that would favor the people. BSI should have been forced to build a new hotel as expected in the contract with the government, and then we would have two fully developed properties instead of an old one being renovated by BSI. In fact, Kan Pacific's plans were to renovate and expand anyway so why didn't DPL force BSI to build a new hotel like we expected?

Now people are in the dark over the lease deal. Just like with the casino, we need to know every month how much we are making or at least an estimate—it is just that simple. The problem is getting the commission to do the work. But thanks to Sen. Palacios, we will know what the CNMI is getting out of this deal even though it was done behind closed doors, which I personally view as an insult to the landowners (the people) and even dumb on DPL's part to let it get to that point. DPL should know that "competition" is the best countermeasure in these kind of deals and letting Kan Pacific and BSI get together only served to empower them to determine what would be done with the property and how much BSI will bid, which will be much lower now with Kan Pacific out of the picture!

There are still other government properties with leases that will need to be renewed so hopefully someone will do the homework so we don't have to go through this again. Thanks, Sen. Palacios, and please consider creating legislation for all government lease renewals or at least force DPL to do its homework because the people are going to continue to be the losers in lease renewal deals without a formal renewal process that is driven by competition to always work in favor of the people and not the investor with the most money who can buy out the competition. The people will also be losing a considerable amount of the Japanese tourist market with the loss of Mariana Resort, narrowing our economic base when we should be broadening it. We can only pray that U.S. and China relations will hold up for the life of our tourist industry.

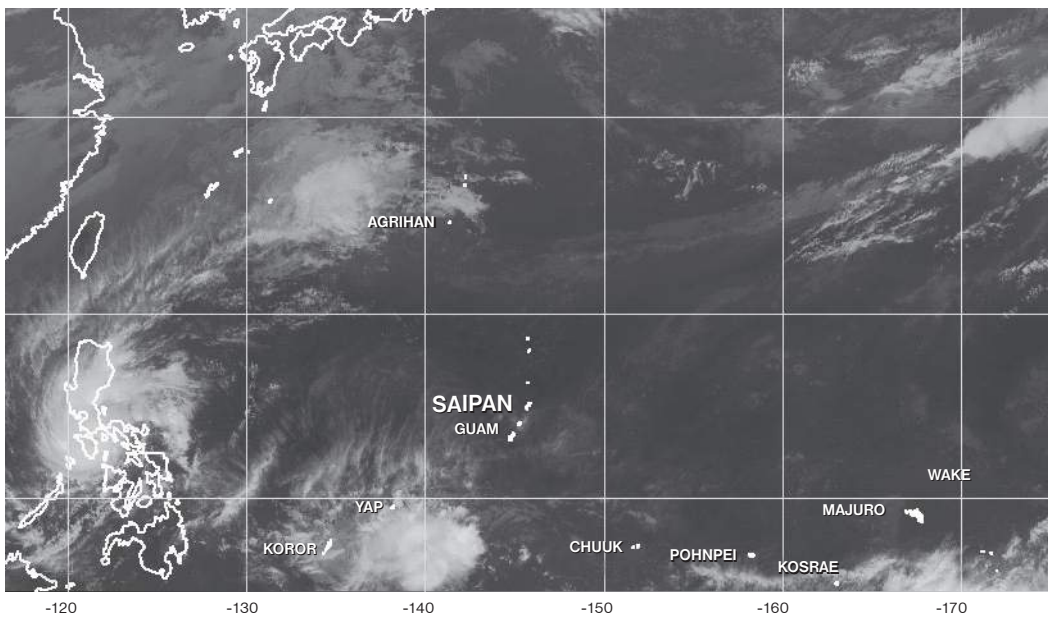
Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A tropical disturbance centered southeast of Yap near 6N143E continues to be the subject of a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are seen southeast of Yap between 5N and 9N from 138E to 144E. Convergent northeast winds west of the disturbance are producing scattered showers over Koror between 6N and 8N from 133E to 138E. For more information on this disturbance, see bulletins issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN21 PGTW. Convergent northeast trade winds are producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms east of Kosrae south of Kwajalein and southwest of Majuro between 3N and 7N from from 165E to 171E. A trade-wind disturbance southeast of Majuro is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms east of Butaritari east of a line from 5N173E to EQ173E. Convergent southeast winds are triggering scattered showers west of Iwo To island north of 23N between 130E and 137E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼78
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼79
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲70	▼56
Beijing	Sunny	▲35	▼18
Hong Kong	Windy	▲63	▼51
Honolulu	Sunny	▲84	▼73
London	Cloudy	▲59	▼54
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲62	▼40
Manila	Rain	▲82	▼74
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼58
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼72
New York	Sunny	▲61	▼44
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲56	▼42
Paris	Cloudy	▲58	▼52
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲46	▼28
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲59	▼41
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲43	▼40
San Francisco	Sunny	▲58	▼45
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲36	▼22
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲61	▼47
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲61	▼41

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:44 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.2 Feet
11:48 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
5:48 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
10:23 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:19 AM	10:19 PM
Thursday	11:07 AM	11:15 PM
Friday	11:53 AM	
Saturday	12:40 PM	12:11 AM
Sunday	1:26 PM	1:08 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Businesses get climate certainty they wanted; now for action

LONDON (AP)—With the new global climate deal, businesses around the world got the long-term certainty that they had been clamoring for—now they need to back up the shift to a greener world with cold hard cash.

Many business leaders have praised the climate deal reached Saturday in Paris, saying it will help them steer their companies and the global economy toward a future that limits emissions of the heat-trapping gases that are endangering the planet.

A low-carbon future will take way more than words, though.

The transition from oil and gas to renewables won't be cheap or easy, but after more than 190 countries signed onto the pact, business have a far clearer sense of what types of energy, products and services will be needed over the long-term. Business leaders have long complained that they weren't able to make investment decisions without a clear political message on the greenhouse gas emissions blamed for global warming.

AP
In this photo taken Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015, a scrap collector salvages material from a demolished neighborhood near a chimney spewing smoke, in Beijing, China.

"This agreement provides business with the critical elements which we were calling for to catalyze a clean, thriving economy," said Edward Cameron, policy chief for the "We Mean Business" coalition of organizations working with companies such as Google, Microsoft and Nike to take strong climate action.

The commitments made in Paris—which aim to make sure global warming stays "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and include pledges to seek to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius—will, businesses say, help unlock the money needed to make the transition to a low-carbon future.

Some say trillions of dollars could now be unlocked in the transition to clean energy.

"We have an opportunity to build a new economy, and business is poised to help make it happen," said Richard Branson, the Virgin Group chief executive said. "The 'Paris effect' will ensure the economy of the future is driven by clean energy."

Details of how each country will regulate emissions—and even what their specific targets are—must still be worked out. So while businesses have a general idea of how the corporate world will change, they don't yet know how emissions will be penalized and how quickly the changes will be adopted.

"The implementation of a Paris Agreement could prove at least as contentious as the negotiations themselves," declared Kevin Book, Managing Director of ClearView Energy Partners in Washington.

And bond-rating firm Moody's says energy businesses in Europe will continue to be at the mercy of European Union policy—and not the pact itself. It says the Paris Agreement "does not provide detailed objectives relative to greenhouse gas emissions nor does it impose any legal obligation to limit or reduce them."

Congress, White House close in on spending bill, tax package

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congressional negotiators and the White House closed in on a deal late Monday on a $1.1 trillion government-wide spending bill to stave off a shutdown, and a tax package extending dozens of breaks.

In a Monday evening conference call among House Republicans, Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., said bargainers were close to agreements on the spending and tax measures that he expected to publicly release Tuesday, which would set up votes later in the week. He said the bills would contain victories for both parties but provided few details, according to an official who described the private conversation on condition of anonymity.

A GOP push to lift the four-decade-old ban on exporting crude oil emerged as a negotiating point in final talks. In return, Democrats sought various environmental concessions, including extending tax credits for solar and wind energy production for five years, and reviving an environmental conservation fund. Democrats also were trying to block GOP efforts to roll back Obama administration environmental regulations, with Democratic lawmakers who traveled to the Paris climate talks returning energized to fight.

"It's like they all went to an international pep rally and got all this emotional wind at their back," GOP Rep. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota said in a phone interview.

Government funding runs out Wednesday at midnight, but Congress will need to pass another short-term extension of a day or two to complete work on the $1.14 trillion government-wide spending bill. Negotiations have dragged on as the legislation has become an increasingly complex grab bag for priorities and trade-offs large and small.

It's also intertwined with another massive bill extending dozens of tax credits benefiting interest groups across the political spectrum, sparking intense lobbying on numerous fronts.

Congressional passage would mean lawmakers would then head home for the holidays, having done their necessary work in typically messy and last-minute fashion.

"Many of us in the Senate and the House and our staffs worked through the weekend and have made a lot of progress," Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada said on the floor as the Senate gaveled back into session at mid-afternoon Monday. "We're not there yet."

The ban on exporting crude oil was instituted during energy shortages of the 1970s but Republicans, and some Democrats, say it's long outlived any usefulness. They note a boom in domestic energy production. Environmental groups and most Democrats counter that the main beneficiaries would be big oil companies.

Samsung asks Supreme Court to throw out $399M judgment

WASHINGTON (AP)—In its patent dispute with Apple, Samsung is asking the Supreme Court to take a digital-age look at an issue it last confronted in the horse-and-buggy era.

South Korea-based Samsung on Monday appealed a $399 million judgment for illegally copying patented aspects of the look of Apple's iPhone, the latest round in a long-running fight between the two tech-industry giants.

The last time the Supreme Court heard cases on patents covering the appearance of a product instead of the way it works was in the late 1800s, when the court battles concerned designs of spoon handles, carpets and saddles. The smartphone is fast becoming as common a possession as those items were in the Victorian age. Nearly two-thirds of Americans own a smartphone, the Pew Research Center said in April, up from about a third just four years earlier. Apple and Samsung are the top two manufacturers of smartphones.

None of the earlier-generation Galaxy and other Samsung phones involved in the lawsuit remains on the market, Samsung said.

The company's appeal raises two issues at the Supreme Court, arguing that the lower-court ruling upholding the judgment "overprotects and overcompensates" Apple's patents.

One question is how juries should value the common features for which Apple holds patents: the flat screen, the rectangular shape with rounded corners, a rim and a screen of icons. Samsung said the jury in this case had too much freedom to look at the overall appearance of the phones, rather than focus on those three elements.

The other issue at the Supreme Court is whether a court can order Samsung to pay Apple every penny it made from the phones at issue when the disputed features are a tiny part of the product.

The federal appeals court in Washington that hears patent cases ruled for Apple on both counts.

"Samsung is escalating this case because it believes that the way the laws were interpreted is not in line with modern times," Samsung said in a statement that accompanied its Supreme Court appeal.

Apple spokeswoman Rachel Tulley said the case is about more than patents and money. "We make these products to delight our customers, not for our competitors to flagrantly copy," Tulley said.

The Supreme Court could decide early next year whether to hear the case, but arguments would not take place before the fall of 2016.

Delta No. 1 corporate airline for 5th year

Corporate travel buyers are calling Delta the leading airline for the fifth consecutive year, rating it No. 1 in the Business Travel News Annual Airline Survey. This is the first time BTN voters, who manage tens of billions of dollars in annual travel spend, have selected the same airline for five years in a row.

Delta swept all 10 survey categories for a second consecutive year, and recorded the largest average scoring margin between the airline and its competitors. BTN voters select the top U.S. carrier in the Business Travel News survey based on their perceptions of airline performance in negotiating and maintaining preferred programs, delivering service and providing value.

"We set winning BTN as our corporate goal every year, and we are proud that it reflects how corporate travel managers and travel agency partners value the service and support we provide," said Steve Sear, Delta Senior Vice President – Sales. "Delta people work tirelessly every day to create the global footprint and meet the travel demands of our customers, and we want them to see us as the company who is easiest to do business with on a worldwide basis."

During Delta's five-year BTN title run, the airline has solidified its domestic and international networks by making significant airport upgrades and adding more than 300 total daily departures from key markets in New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Seattle. Additionally, Delta has further extended its global reach by adding partnerships with Virgin Atlantic, Gol, Aeromexico, China Eastern and Virgin Australia.

To date, Delta once again leads all major domestic global carriers in the U.S. Department of Transportation's metrics for on-time performance, completion factor, fewest baggage handling complaints and fewest overall service complaints. And, it was on the continued strength of these results that Delta's Global Sales team launched the Operational Performance Commitment (OPC) that guarantees it will outperform its top global competitors, or compensate corporations for falling short. Customers repeatedly note that Delta's commitment to excellent operational performance and continued innovation makes the airline a top choice for corporate customers.

Capitalizing on Delta's more than $8 billion in product, performance, and technology investments, Delta's Global Sales team has invested in creating meaningful, industry-first programs like OPC and Sky Partner Performance+ to assist businesses in their efforts to manage employee travel. These combined efforts have resulted in Delta's corporate revenue growing more that 20 percent since 2011. ***(Delta)***

Nation

Americans want to get tougher with the Islamic State

WASHINGTON (AP)—After terrorist attacks at home and abroad, more Americans than ever—but still less than half—support sending U.S. ground troops to fight the Islamic State, according to a new Associated Press-GfK Poll. A large majority also want a clearer explanation from President Barack Obama about his strategy to defeat the group.

The percentage of Americans who favor deploying U.S. troops to fight IS militants has risen from 31 percent to 42 percent over the past year in AP-GfK polling, although it isn't clear whether those respondents favor a small contingent or a larger ground force that might engage in another protracted Middle Eastern war. Other national surveys in recent weeks have found similar or greater support for American ground troops.

Obama recently dispatched about 50 special operations forces to coordinate the fight in Syria, adding to the more than 3,000 troops already in Iraq. But he and most other politicians oppose sending a large American contingent to augment the U.S.-led coalition air campaign. Most Republicans running for president have not called for that, either, although Donald Trump recently said he would support 10,000 troops, a figure originally floated by South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham.

Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton has pledged to keep American troops out of Syria, saying she would resist sending forces to fight Islamic militants even if there's another terrorist attack within the U.S.

AP

A German police officer guards a terminal of the airport in Frankfurt, Germany, Monday, Nov. 16, 2015.

In the poll, 56 percent of Americans said the U.S. military response to the Islamic State group has not gone far enough, up from 46 percent since October 2014.

Six in 10 Republicans, but only about 3 in 10 Democrats or independents, support sending ground troops, the poll showed.

Analysts say the public desire for more action reflects growing anxiety over the Islamic State after its attack in Paris, and the shootings in San Bernardino, California, carried out by a couple apparently inspired by the group. There is also widespread unease about Obama's strategy, which envisions a long, slow campaign of airstrikes, diplomacy, training, financial sanctions and other measures.

White House officials say Obama recognizes the need to make the case for his strategy. The president gave an Oval Office speech last week, visited the Pentagon Monday and is expected to visit a counterterrorism facility later in the week.

But Obama has pointedly made the case against a U.S. ground invasion. The U.S. military could clear the Islamic State from its headquarters in Raqqa, Syria, but IS troops would return unless a local ground force was available to keep order, he said Nov, 16, after the attacks in Paris.

"Let's assume that we were to send 50,000 troops into Syria," Obama said. "What happens when there's a terrorist attack generated from Yemen? Do we then send more troops into there? Or Libya, perhaps? "

Most interviews for the AP-GfK poll, which was conducted Dec. 3-7, were completed before last Sunday's Oval Office address, but the survey found the president had an uphill battle to allay Americans' concerns.

Just 28 percent in the survey said Obama had clearly explained the United States' goals in fighting the Islamic State, while 68 percent said he had not. Eighty-eight percent of Republicans and 66 percent of independents said the president had not clearly explained the goals, and even among Democrats 51 percent agreed.

SIDEBAR

In schools, on streets and TV, children feel Muslim backlash

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A backlash against American Muslims is leaving a mark on some of the nation's youngest minds.

After seeing presidential candidate Donald Trump call on television for barring Muslims from entering the country, 8-year-old Sofia Yassini checked the locks on her family's home in Plano, Texas, imagining the Army would take them away. She raced to her room and stuffed a pair of Barbie dolls, a tub of peanut butter and a toothbrush into a bag. She insisted on bringing boots for the long boat ride she imagined was coming.

When her mother, Melissa, arrived home from her work as a human resources manager, Sofia ran into her arms and cried.

"I want people to understand the impact that their words have on these children," said Melissa Yassini, who described the experience in a Facebook post that had been shared more than 21,000 times as of Monday. "We often forget, we're waging war on one another with words, and we're adults. We can take it. The kids are suffering with this. They go to school every day and they're afraid to tell people they're Muslim. This has to stop."

Anti-Muslim sentiment was building in the days before 14 people were killed Dec. 2 in the massacre at a disability center in Southern California by a Muslim couple investigators say were inspired at least in part by the Islamic State group. Some governors had already said they wouldn't allow Syrians fleeing civil war into their states because of extremist fears. Experts say Trump's call Dec. 7 to keep all Muslims from entering the United States—a plan he said would apply only temporarily and to non-citizens—only fanned the flames.

Parents say their children hear disparaging remarks in their own communities, see hateful bumper stickers and T-shirts, and have had friends abandon them because of their faith.

Ahad Khan, 12, came home from school in rural Westminster, Maryland, in tears because his best friend called him a future terrorist who couldn't be trusted, according to Ahad's father, Raza Khan.

Bergdahl to face desertion charge in general court-martial

WASHINGTON (AP)—Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was held captive by the Taliban for five years and freed in exchange for five detainees in Guantanamo Bay, will face charges of desertion and misbehavior before the enemy in a general court-martial, the Army announced on Monday.

If convicted, Bergdahl could get life in prison on the misbehavior charge and up to five years for desertion. He also could be dishonorably discharged, reduced in rank and made to forfeit all pay.

Bergdahl, 29, of Hailey, Idaho, walked off his post in eastern Afghanistan's Paktika province on June 30, 2009. He was released in the prisoner swap in late May 2014 that touched off a firestorm of criticism, with some in Congress accusing President Barack Obama of jeopardizing the safety of a nation for a deserter.

A date for an arraignment hearing at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, will be announced later.

Bergdahl's attorney, Eugene Fidell, said the convening authority—a high-ranking officer charged with deciding whether evidence warrants a court-martial—did not follow the advice of a preliminary hearing officer.

Lt. Col. Mark Visger had recommended that Bergdahl's case be referred to a special court martial, which is a misdemeanor-level forum. That limits the maximum punishment to reduction in rank, a bad-conduct discharge and a term of up to a year in prison.

The U.S. Army Forces Command charged Bergdahl on March 25 with "desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty" and "misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place."

Misbehavior before the enemy was used hundreds of times during World War II, but scholars say its use appears to have dwindled in conflicts since then. Legal databases and media accounts turn up only a few misbehavior cases since 2001 when fighting began in Afghanistan, followed by Iraq less than two years later. By contrast, statistics show the U.S. Army prosecuted about 1,900 desertion cases between 2001 and the end of 2014.

Fidell has argued his client is being charged twice for the same action, saying in a previous television interview that "it's unfortunate that someone got creative in drafting the charge sheet and figured out two ways to charge the same thing."

Separately, Fidell, a military justice expert who is also a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School, complained about political figures who have made derogatory statements about Bergdahl.

Fidell asked that Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump "cease his prejudicial months-long campaign of defamation against our client. In October, Trump called Bergdahl a "traitor, a no-good traitor, who should have been executed."

ACROSS THE NATION

Fatal police shooting in LA suburb was different from others

LYNWOOD, Calif. (AP)—When deputies confronted a man carrying a handgun in a Los Angeles suburb, the fatal shooting that unfolded was notably different from other recent flashpoints in the debate over police use of force: The suspect was armed and in an area crowded with people. Friends and relatives of Nicholas Robertson quickly questioned the police tactics that led to his death, particularly why officers fired at a person who was apparently moving away from them and why they kept firing even after he crumpled to the ground. But law-enforcement professionals said Monday that the shooting did not immediately appear to share much, if anything, in common with other police shootings that have resulted in criminal charges against officers. Robertson was killed by officers Saturday after witnesses reported seeing a man firing a handgun into the air six or seven times and briefly going inside a car wash and a pizza parlor.

Prosecutor: Teen who killed teacher knew right from wrong

SALEM, Mass. (AP)—A Massachusetts teenager who raped and killed his high school math teacher "knew right from wrong and could choose right from wrong," a prosecutor said Monday during closing arguments in the teen's murder trial. But a defense attorney for Philip Chism said the then-14-year-old was in "the throes of mental illness" when he killed 24-year-old Colleen Ritzer shortly after he moved to Massachusetts from Clarksville, Tennessee. Jurors deliberated for a little over three hours before going home for the day. Deliberations are set to resume Tuesday. Prosecutors say Chism strangled his algebra teacher and stabbed her with a box cutter in a Danvers High School bathroom in 2013, then used a recycling bin to bring her body into nearby woods. Jurors were shown chilling surveillance video from the school that shows Ritzer walking into the bathroom, then Chism following her wearing a hood and putting on gloves.

Chicago firefighter dies after falling down elevator shaft

CHICAGO (AP)—A Chicago firefighter died early Monday after falling two stories down an elevator shaft while fighting a smoky blaze in a warehouse on the city's South Side. Firefighter Daniel Capuano, 42, was searching for the source of the blaze on the second floor, but he couldn't see because of heavy smoke and fell down the shaft to the basement, Chicago Fire Department Commissioner Jose Santiago said. "As the firefighters went in there they saw some holes throughout the floor," Santiago said. "They gave out an emergency alert, 'Be careful.' It looks like Firefighter Daniel had just walked into the elevator shaft as he was searching, couldn't see and fell." Other firefighters quickly reached Capuano, a father of three, and got him to an ambulance, Santiago said. Capuano was pronounced dead at 4:25 a.m. at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn.

Asia

Typhoon weakens but leaves 1 dead as it crosses PH

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Typhoon Melor weakened Tuesday as it crossed over the central Philippines, leaving one man dead and wide areas without power. About 730,000 people were evacuated to safer grounds before the typhoon hit.

The government weather bureau said Melor was northwest of central Romblon Island, packing winds of 140 kilometers (87 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 170 kph (106 mph). Classes, flights and ferry trips remain suspended in affected areas.

The typhoon is expected to exit the land mass of Mindoro island later Tuesday, said Adzar Aurelio, a government weather forecaster. It will move over the South China Sea away from the country, and is forecast to weaken to a severe tropical storm on Wednesday and to a tropical depression by Thursday.

One fatality has been confirmed. Edgar Posadas, a regional civil defense official, said a 31-year-old man was hit Monday by a dislodged tin sheet while he was fixing his house's roof in Northern Samar province.

The national disaster management agency said 733,153 people were evacuated before the typhoon hit, and officials said that averted more casualties.

About 20 storms and typhoons hit the Philippines each year. In November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest typhoon on record to make landfall, left more than 7,300 people dead and missing as it leveled entire villages and swept walls of seawater into parts of the central Philippines.

AP

Residents while away their time at an evacuation center in Legazpi city, central Philippines as Typhoon Melor slammed into the eastern Philippines, Monday, Dec. 14, 2015.

Chinese police scuffle with protesters at lawyer's trial

BEIJING (AP)—Police scuffled with protesters and journalists at a Beijing courthouse Monday as a prominent rights lawyer stood trial on charges of provoking trouble and stirring ethnic hatred with online commentary critical of the ruling Communist Party.

Chinese protesters and foreign rights groups said Pu Zhiqiang's trial at the No. 2 Beijing Intermediate Court amounted to political persecution, and foreign governments including the U.S. called for his release. Pu denied the charges and the trial concluded about midday, with Pu's lawyer Shang Baojun saying a verdict and sentence would be delivered at a later date.

"Pu Zhiqiang is a lawyer with a conscience," activist Yang Qiuyu said in a brief interview outside the courthouse while a policeman tried to grab him. "This is why he is now under arrest. We support him, and that means that we are also defending our own rights."

Pu was active in defending free speech and represented dissident artist Ai Weiwei in a tax evasion case that Ai's supporters said was politically motivated. He also was instrumental in pushing for the eventual abolishment of the labor camp system, which allowed police to lock up people for up to four years without a trial.

About 50 protesters had gathered at the courthouse along with two dozen journalists and about a dozen Western diplomats, but all of them were denied entrance. In noisy scuffles, police and plainclothes security officers wearing yellow smiley-face stickers pushed journalists and protesters away from the court entrance area. They threw one of the protesters to the ground and took away several others.

At least one foreign journalist also was slammed to the ground, the Foreign Correspondents Club of China said in an open letter of complaint about the rough treatment.

The charges against Pu relate to a number of posts on China's Twitter-like Sina Weibo that questioned the party's policies toward the Tibetan and Uighur (pronounced WEE-gur) ethnic minorities in the Tibet and Xinjiang regions, and mocked political figures. Mo Shaoping, another defense lawyer, said that Pu pleaded not guilty, and that prosecutors had not demonstrated that any of Pu's postings had provoked troubles or incited ethnic tensions.

"This is really a case of freedom of expression, in which no harm to anyone has been proven," Mo said in an interview after the trial.

Pu's lawyers asked for bail, arguing that he was no danger to the public and had medical ailments that needed attention.

The court did not answer phone calls, and prosecutors could not immediately be reached for comment.

Since coming to power in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping has spearheaded crackdowns on civil activists, rights lawyers and online freedom of expression, in moves aimed at snuffing out any potential threats to the Communist Party's grip on power.

Reports: China tycoon appears at event after disappearance

BEIJING (AP)—The chairman of the Chinese conglomerate that owns Club Med and whose company said he was assisting an official investigation after he disappeared for a day last week, appeared Monday at a corporate meeting, two newspapers reported.

The government has released no details about Fosun chairman Guo Guangchang and Fosun has yet to say whether he was under investigation or was being questioned about other people.

A 3-year-old anti-corruption crackdown led by President Xi Jinping that has snared dozens of executives at state companies. A series of securities executives have disappeared or been detained since regulators launched an investigation after Chinese share prices plunged in June.

On Monday, Guo spoke at Fosun's previously scheduled annual meeting, according to the newspapers China Business News and The Paper. Both quoted identical comments from him saying Fosun needs to expand globally but gave no indication whether he mentioned the investigation.

Photos on the papers' websites showed Guo, 48, in a gray business suit and open-necked white shirt speaking at a podium and sitting with other executives.

Fosun suspended trading of its shares Friday after a business magazine reported the company was unable to contact Guo. The company issued a statement later that day saying Guo was "currently assisting in certain investigations carried out by mainland judiciary authorities."

Employees who answered the phone Monday at Fosun's headquarters said no one was working in the public relations department.

Guo was cited by a Shanghai court in August as being linked to the chairman of a state-owned supermarket chain who was sentenced to 18 years in prison on corruption charges. Fosun denied any wrongdoing in its dealings with the chairman. Guo is one of China's biggest investors abroad. Fosun, which he co-founded in the 1990s, has businesses in real estate, steel, mining and retailing.

The Financial Times dubbed him "China's Warren Buffett" for following the legendary American investor's approach of using the cash flow from insurance operations to buy other businesses.

Fosun won a bidding war this year to take over Club Mediterranee, the French resort operator. Last year, it paid 1 billion euros ($1.1 billion) for Portugal's biggest insurance company, Caixa Seguros. In the United States, it owns Meadowbrook Insurance Group Inc., 20 percent of insurer Ironshore Inc. and the 60-story office tower at 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza in New York City.

ASIAN BRIEFS

New Zealand picks new flag design to challenge current flag

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—New Zealanders chose a new flag design Tuesday but the question now is whether enough people will rally behind it to oust the current flag. Final results from a postal ballot were announced. The winning design features a silver fern and red stars on a black and blue background. The new design will now go head-to-head against the current flag in a national vote in March. The winning design has similarities to the current flag but ditches the British Union Jack in favor of the fern, which has become a national symbol and is worn by many sports teams, including the beloved All Blacks rugby team. New Zealanders earlier submitted more than 10,000 designs as they contemplated a change in their national symbol.

Man charged in notorious Australian double killing

SYDNEY (AP)—A man accused of killing a woman whose bones were found in a forest has been charged with the slaying of the woman's 2-year-old daughter, whose body was discovered dumped in a suitcase 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) away from her mother's remains. New South Wales police said Tuesday that Daniel Holdom had been charged with the murder of Khandalyce Pearce. The toddler's body was found on the side of a road in South Australia earlier this year. The charges come two months after Holdom was charged with the murder of Khandalyce's mother and seven years after police say the pair were killed at different times and in different locations. Holdom's lawyer did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

Cambodia's Khmer Rouge tribunal charges former navy chief

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—The U.N.-backed tribunal trying members of Cambodia's former Khmer Rouge regime for genocide and other crimes says it has formally charged the group's navy commander, Meas Muth. Prime Minister Hun Sen has opposed any expansion of the trial, and Cambodian police had refused to arrest Meas Muth. The tribunal said Meas Muth appeared voluntarily to hear the charges against him.

The tribunal operates under a system which pairs international and Cambodian judges, prosecutors and lawyers. Three defendants have been found guilty in earlier trials, but Cambodian officials have not cooperated in prosecuting new suspects. The charges against Meas Muth include homicide, genocide, crimes against humanity and other offenses. Hun Sen was a mid-level Khmer Rouge commander before defecting while the group was still in power.

Nation

Egypt's finding on Russian jet crash conflicts with others

AP
In this Sunday, Nov. 1, 2015 photo provided by Russian Emergency Situations Ministry, Egyptian Military on cars approach a plane's tail at the wreckage of a passenger jet bound for St. Petersburg in Russia that crashed in Hassana, Egypt.

CAIRO (AP)—Egypt said Monday it has not yet found any sign of terrorism in the deadly Oct. 31 crash of a Russian passenger jet in the Sinai desert, a preliminary finding that conflicts with Russian, U.S. and British statements that they believed a bomb on the aircraft probably was to blame.

The vaguely worded Egyptian statement reflected the deep reluctance among government authorities to point to the possibility of a bomb, and the implication of lax security at the Sharm el-Sheikh airport, where the Metrojet plane took off.

The Airbus A321-200 broke apart 23 minutes after departing the Red Sea resort for St. Petersburg, killing all 224 people aboard. The crash led Russia to halt all flights to and from Egypt, while Britain suspended flights to and from the resort. The actions inflicted a heavy blow to Egypt's vital tourism industry.

Several officials involved in Egypt's investigation told The Associated Press that security gaps at the Sharm el-Sheikh airport were making finding a culprit more difficult, including poor video surveillance and the number of people who could enter the facility with only limited searches.

Soon after the crash, the U.S. and Britain said the plane probably was brought down by a bomb, in part citing chatter among militants in Sinai. On Nov. 17, Moscow also announced a bomb was to blame, saying its tests had found the equivalent of 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of TNT went off aboard the Airbus, causing it to break apart in the air. In response, Egyptian Prime Minister Sherif Ismail said only that his country would "bear in mind" the Russian conclusion.

A local affiliate of the Islamic State group claimed responsibility and released an online photo of what it said was the bomb used to bring the plane down—a soft-drink can packed with explosives with wires that appeared to be a kind of detonator.

The head of Egypt's main investigation, run by the Civil Aviation Ministry, said its inquiry so far has found no evidence of any "illegal or terrorist act." Its preliminary report has been given to other countries involved, and it is continuing its work, said chief investigator Ayman el-Muqadam.

He also complained that the countries contending a bomb was to blame have not given his investigators "any information indicating unlawful interference" with the plane.

The ministry-led investigation, in which Russia and several other countries are taking part, has so far focused on technical aspects of the plane, including analyzing cockpit voice and flight data recorders. The prosecutor's office has a separate inquiry involving the Interior Ministry, which is supposed to determine whether a criminal act took place.

The head of the prosecution-led investigation, Emad el-Dahshan, told AP, "We have no suspects." He said video surveillance of the airport showed nothing.

Saudi-led coalition delays truce with Yemen rebels

SANAA, Yemen (AP)—The Saudi-led coalition supporting Yemen's internationally recognized government said Monday that a planned truce with the country's Shiite rebels has been postponed for 12 hours.

The official Saudi news agency announced the postponement late Monday, saying coalition forces will halt fire at noon (0900 GMT, 4 a.m. EST) Tuesday. The ceasefire was originally scheduled to start at midnight Monday (2100 GMT, 4 p.m. EST).

The statement did not provide further details about the reason for the postponement. Rebel leaders could not immediately be reached for comment.

The warring sides had agreed to a weeklong ceasefire to coincide with peace talks in Switzerland scheduled to begin on Tuesday.

Yemen's fighting pits the internationally recognized government backed by a Saudi-led, U.S.-supported coalition against the rebels, known as Houthis, who are allied with a former president and backed by Iran. Yemen's local al-Qaida and Islamic State affiliates have been exploiting the chaos to grab territory and exercise influence in the east and south of the country.

Previous truces and U.N.-brokered talks to end the violence have failed, as the government insisted the Houthis honor a U.N. resolution that obliges them to give up arms seized from the state and withdraw from territory they had captured over the past year, including the capital, Sanaa. The Houthis, however, have demanded negotiations over the country's political future.

According to the U.N., the war has killed at least 5,878 people so far since the fighting escalated after the Saudi-led coalition began launching airstrikes against rebel positions in March.

Earlier in the day, ground fighting and coalition airstrikes continued across the country, killing at least 34 people, including 10 civilians, according to security and medical officials. The officials, who have remained neutral in Yemen's civil war, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

Among the dead were two senior coalition officials from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen's southwestern Taiz province. The official Saudi and Emirati news agencies did not specify how they were killed. The two were identified as Saudi Col. Abdullah Mohammed al-Sahyan and Emirati officer Sultan Mohammed Ali al-Ketb.

The Houthis announced in a statement that the two coalition officials were killed when the rebels fired a long-range missile at a secret headquarters of the pro-government military leadership close to the strategic strait of Bab al-Mandab.

Merkel tells her party Germany will reduce migrant influx

KARLSRUHE, Germany (AP)—Germany will reduce its migrant influx, Chancellor Angela Merkel promised her conservative party Monday, insisting that she's still confident her diplomatic efforts will work and Europe will pass the "historic test" posed by the refugee crisis.

Germany has seen about a million asylum-seekers arrive this year. Merkel has declared that "we will manage it," but some in her conservative bloc have urged a tougher approach.

"We want to, and will, appreciably reduce the number of refugees, because it's in everyone's interest," Merkel said in a confident speech to her Christian Democratic Union that was greeted with a standing ovation.

Still the chancellor—who last week was named Time magazine's Person of the Year—stuck to her optimistic mantra, insisting that Germany can handle the migrant crisis "because it is part of the identity of our country to do great things."

Her decision in early September to let in migrants who had piled up in Hungary was "no more and no less than a humanitarian imperative," she added.

Merkel has made clear that she wants to reduce the influx but has resisted calls to set a specific limit on the number of refugees Germany can take, arguing that she would risk making a promise that she can't keep. She stresses instead the importance of finding a diplomatic solution for the crisis with the rest of Europe and with Turkey, which is hosting as many as 2.2 million Syrian refugees.

Ahead of Monday's conference, CDU leaders made some rhetorical concessions to members worried about Germany's ability to absorb more newcomers. The motion on the crisis presented to delegates said the party is determined to reduce the refugee influx through "effective measures," since "a continuation of the current influx would in the long term overburden the state and society."

That was enough to persuade the party's youth wing to withdraw a motion calling for a limit on refugee numbers and quell speculation about a possible party rebellion.

WORLD BRIEFS

Guinea's president sworn in for 2nd term

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP)—Guinea's President Alpha Conde has been sworn in for a second five-year term in a ceremony under heavy military and police security. Conde's second term begins weeks before the West African country hopes to mark itself free from Ebola transmission. The deadly disease killed more than 2,500 people in Guinea. Conde on Monday, before 1,500 people including dignitaries and politicians, dedicated his second term to helping women and children, and fighting corruption. Rights groups have called on Conde to use his second term to intensify the fight against the impunity of security forces who are accused of abuses. Conde was re-elected in October in only the second democratic presidential contest since Guinea gained independence from France in 1958. Violence marked the run-up to the poll but eventually subsided.

2 killed in clashes in Turkey as Kurds denounce curfew

ANKARA, Turkey (AP)—Police on Monday clashed with a group of Kurds following a protest by some 5,000 people denouncing a dayslong curfew imposed by the government in one neighborhood in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir. Two people were killed, a human rights group said. Police used water cannons to break up the demonstration organized by Turkey's pro-Kurdish political party and also clashed with a group who set up a barricade and set fires on a road in Diyarbakir. Raci Bilici of the Turkish Human Rights Association said two people were killed in the clashes. Turkey is imposing 24-hour curfews that last for days in towns and districts in southeastern Turkey as the security forces battle Kurdish militants who dig up ditches or set up barricades.

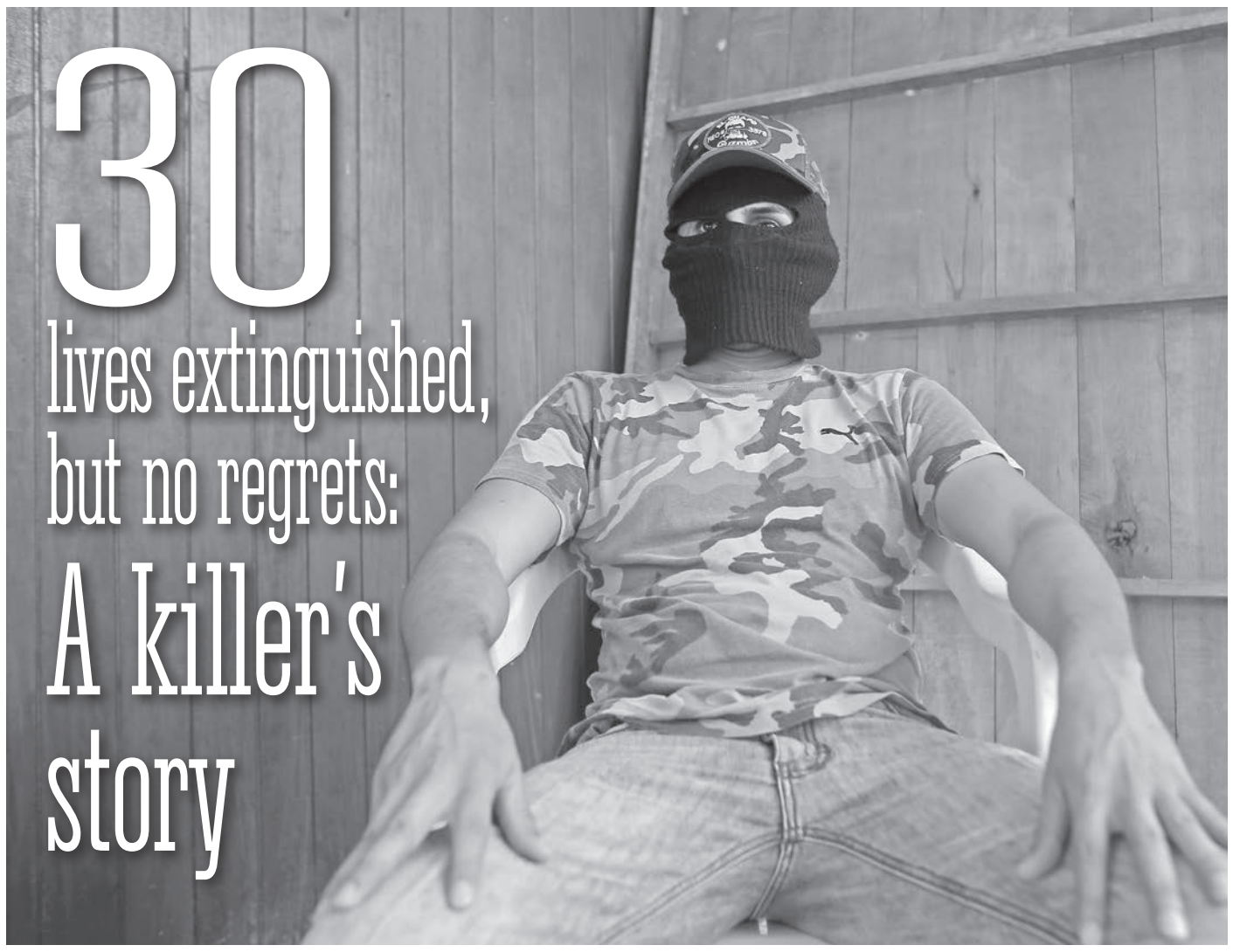
Abbas: Palestinian violence is 'justified popular uprising'

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas referred to the last three months of violence Monday as a "justified popular uprising".Abbas's comments came as a new poll shows widespread Palestinian support for ongoing attacks on Israelis. Later Monday, a Palestinian from east Jerusalem rammed his car into a crowded bus stop, wounding nine before bystanders shot him dead. Israeli leaders have accused Abbas and other Palestinian leaders of inciting the violence with incendiary rhetoric. Abbas has previously refrained from either endorsing or condemning the attacks, often referring to the wave of violence as understandable but not in the best interests of the Palestinian people. "We cannot ask the youth why they are going out (to revolt)," Abbas said in Ramallah. "They just despaired of the two-state solution."

Focus

30 lives extinguished, but no regrets: A killer's story

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO
ASSOCIATED PRESS



AP

In this Nov. 29, 2015 photo, a man claiming to be responsible for kidnapping, torture and killing on behalf of a drug cartel speaks to the Associated Press in Guerrero state's Costa Grande region, Mexico. The 29-year-old raises cattle for a living and doesn't consider himself a drug trafficker or a professional killer, although he is paid for disappearing people. While he acknowledges that what he does is illegal, he says he is defending his people against the violence of other cartels.

IGUALA, Mexico (AP)—The killer says he "disappeared" a man for the first time at age 20. Nine years later, he says, he has eliminated 30 people—maybe three in error.

He sometimes feels sorry about the work he does but has no regrets, he says, because he is providing a kind of public service, defending his community from outsiders. Things would be much worse if rivals took over.

"A lot of times your neighborhood, your town, your city is being invaded by people who you think are going to hurt your family, your society," he says. "Well, then you have to act, because the government isn't going to come help you."

He operates along the Costa Grande of Guerrero, the southwestern state that is home to glitzy Acapulco as well as to rich farmland used to cultivate heroin poppies and marijuana. Large swaths of the state are controlled or contested by violent drug cartels that traffic in opium paste for the U.S. market, and more than 1,000 people have been reported missing in Guerrero since 2007—far fewer than the actual number believed to have disappeared in the state.

The plight of the missing and their families burst into public awareness last year when 43 rural college students were detained by police and disappeared from the Guerrero city of Iguala, setting off national protests. Then, suddenly, hundreds more families from the area came forward to report their kidnap victims, known now as "the other disappeared." They told stories of children and spouses abducted from home at gunpoint, or who left the house one day and simply vanished.

This is a story from the other side, the tale of a man who kidnaps, tortures and kills for a drug cartel. His story is the mirror image of those recounted by survivors and victims' families, and seems to confirm their worst fears: Many, if not most, of the disappeared likely are never coming home.

"Have you disappeared people?" he is asked.

"Yes," he replies.

In Mexico and other places where kidnapping is common, the word "disappeared" is an active verb and also an adjective to describe the missing. Disappearing someone means kidnapping, torturing, killing and disposing of the body in a place where no one will ever find it.

To date, none of the killer's victims have been found, he says.

For months, the AP approached sources connected with cartel bosses, seeking an interview with someone who executes people on their behalf.

Finally, the bosses put forward this 29-year-old man, with conditions: He, his organization and the town where he met with reporters would not be identified. He would appear on camera wearing a ski mask, and his voice would be distorted. And one of his bosses would be present throughout.

In jeans and a camouflage T-shirt, the hit man looked younger than his 29 years. He wore a baseball cap with a badge bearing the face of Sinaloa cartel boss Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman and "prisoner 3578"—Guzman's inmate number before he escaped through a tunnel from Mexico's maximum-security prison in July, cementing his image as a folk hero.

"Of all the bad lot," the killer said, Guzman "seems to be the least bad."

The killer—who does not work for Guzman—does not see himself as bad. Unlike others, he says, he has standards: He doesn't kill women or children. He doesn't make his victims dig their own graves. He raises cattle for a living and doesn't consider himself a drug trafficker or a professional killer, although he is paid for disappearing people. While he acknowledges that what he does is illegal, he says he is defending his people against the violence of other cartels.

The killer wears a bag with a strap over his chest in which he carries several walkie-talkies and cell phones, one of which he used to take calls and issue orders: "Muevanse," he said - move on. "Esperense ahí" - wait there. Just before the interview begins, he puts the bag aside, and slips on the ski mask. He sits in a plastic armchair.

There are many reasons people are disappeared, the killer says. It may be for belonging to a rival gang, or for giving information to one. If a person is considered a security risk for any reason, he may be disappeared. Some are kidnapped for ransom, though he says he does not do this.

Each kidnapping starts with locating the target. The best place is at a home, early in the morning, "when everyone is asleep." But sometimes they are kidnapped from public areas. If the target is unarmed, two men are enough to carry out a "pickup" or "levanton," as the gang kidnappings are known. If he is armed, it requires more manpower.

The victim is taken to a safe house or far enough out into the woods that no one will hear him during the next step: "getting information out of them by torture."

He rests his forearms on the chair and moves his hands over his knees as he speaks about torture. He describes three methods: beatings; waterboarding, or simulated drownings in which a cloth is tied around the mouth and nose, and water is poured over it; and electric shocks to the testicles, tongue and the soles of the feet.

He has no training in torture. He learned it all by practice, he says. "With time, you come to learn how to hurt people, to get the information you need."

It usually takes just one night. "Of the people who have information you want, 99 percent will give you that information," he says. Once he gets it, he kills them. "Usually with a gun."

The problem is that people under torture sometimes admit to things that are not true: "They do it in hope that you will stop hurting them. They think it's a way to get out of the situation."

That may have happened to him three times, he says, leading him to kill the wrong men.

The dead are buried in clandestine grave sites, dumped into the ocean, or burned. If the organization wants to send a message to another cartel, a victim's tortured body is dumped in a public area. But the 30 people he has "disappeared" all have been buried, he says.

By the official count, 26,000 Mexicans have been reported missing nationwide since 2007, just over 1,000 of those from Guerrero. But human rights officials and the experience of families from the Iguala area indicate that most people are too afraid to report kidnappings, particularly in areas where police, municipal and state officials are believed to be operating in tandem with the cartels. The official tally has just 24 missing from the Costa Grande area, where the killer says he has been involved in the killings of 30 people.

"The (disappeared) problem is much bigger than people think," the killer says.

The killer has a grade-school education. He wanted to continue studying, but when he was a child there was no middle school in his town. "I would have liked to learn languages ... to travel to other places or other countries. I would have liked that," he said.

Some in his circumstances use drugs, but he says he doesn't. "When people are on drugs, they're not really themselves," he says. "They lose control, their judgment."

He says no one forced him to join his organization. His parents and siblings don't know what he does, but he thinks they can guess, since he is always armed: He usually carries a .38-caliber pistol and an AK-47 assault rifle.

He isn't married and has no children. Although he would like to have a family, he knows his future is uncertain. "I don't really see anything," he said. "I don't think you can make plans for the future, because you don't know what will happen tomorrow."

"It's not a pretty life," he says.

Life in an area torn by drug disputes is rarely pretty. For years, Guzman's Sinaloa cartel controlled drug production, coastal access and trafficking routes in Guerrero. The Beltran Leyva brothers took over, until the Mexican government killed Arturo Beltran Leyva in a shootout in December 2009, and then the state's opium and marijuana business was divided up among half a dozen smaller cartels, including Guerreros Unidos, los Rojos, Los Granados and La Familia, from neighboring Michoacan state.

Besides running drugs, some Mexican cartels operate extortion rackets and control human trafficking to the United States. Where needed, they buy off politicians and police forces to make sure nothing gets in the way of business. When necessary, they kill those who fail to cooperate.

The violence spikes when cartels are fighting each other for control of territory, or when the military launches operations to strike the cartels. An anti-narcotics military operation prevented the killer's arrival at a pre-arranged location on the first try, but the next day he and his bosses made it to a house on a humid stretch of the Pacific Ocean known as the Costa Grande, an area lush with groves of coconuts and mangos - other exports for which cartels take a cut.

In recent years, residents of a number of towns and cities have taken up arms to protect themselves against drug cartels. In several cases, authorities have claimed these vigilantes are allied with rival gangs, and pass themselves off as self-defense groups to gain greater legitimacy.

Federal authorities told the AP that several drug gangs in Guerrero, including those that operate on the Costa Grande, act as self-defense groups to generate support from local residents.

"I can't say I'm a vigilante," says the killer, "but I am part of a group that protects people, an autonomous group of people who protect their town, their people."

He recognizes he would be punished if caught by the authorities. "For them, these (killings) are not justifiable under the laws we have, but my conscience—how can I put this—this is something that I can justify, because I am defending my family." A rival gang, "would do worse damage."

The killer fears dying, but he fears being captured by a rival gang even more. He knows better than most what will happen to him: "If I died in a shootout, for example, the suffering wouldn't be as bad."

With the same lack of emotion with which he described torture, the killer addresses his many murders.

"Whatever you want to say, you're hurting someone and in the end, you kill them, and that leaves people hurting, the family hurting," he said. "It's the kind of thing that causes stress and remorse, because it's not a good thing."

But he tries not to think about it too much, and while he can remember the number of people he has killed and the places he buried them, he says he cannot recall his victims. "Over time," he says, "you forget."

Good Housekeeping

What should you do if you have a holiday emergency?

Develop a good working relationship with a reliable HVAC company before disaster strikes so you won't be left in the cold on Christmas.
BRANDON SMITH

By STACI GIORDULLO
ANGIE'S LIST

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, but as luck would have it, there was no hot air (thanks to the furnace dying on Christmas morning). What's a homeowner to do if they have such an emergency, like a pipe bursting or the HVAC system failing, and it happens to be a major holiday? We asked some of our highly rated contractors—as well as members who have experienced such a conundrum —how do you save the holiday?

Don't panic

After discovering the basement of her Denver home was flooded the night of December 24th, that's exactly what Angie's List member Deb Ward did—panic. "I was so extremely worried!" she says. "Who in the world would be available for a plumbing job this late on a Christmas Eve night?"

Ward quickly turned to Angie's List and found Garvin's Sewer Service of Englewood, Colorado, who immediately sent a technician to the house. After an hour of him snaking the clogged sewer drain, the water receded and he cleaned up the mess that was left behind.

"I was so thankful," Ward says, and advises others in a similar situation to try to remain calm, get control of the situation by moving anything out of harm's way, and then get on Angie's List. "Don't assume you're up a creek without a paddle, because chances are you will be able to find someone who can help."

Know your house

Make sure you know where things that you might need to access during an emergency are in the home, including flashlights, fire extinguishers and even phone numbers to your local utility companies (especially the "after-hours" hotline) in case they need to be notified.

"Everyone should know where their valves are, says Frank Bianco, owner of First Class Home Renovations in Philadelphia. "If you're having a water leak, shut off your main water valve. If you're having problem with your gas line, shut that off. Know where your electrical box is. A lot of people don't know."

Know your company

This one takes some foresight, but developing an ongoing relationship with a reputable contractor can help save the day when you're in a pinch. "Find a company that you can trust and that you can figure out a few things with over the phone," says Ryan Carpenter, owner of Plumbing Heating Paramedics in Fishers, Indiana. "Even if it's just stopping the problem until I can get there. If there's water spraying all over the bathroom, I can talk you through how to shut off the valve."

Know the rate

Yes, some companies will charge overtime rates if it's after hours or a holiday. Some—but not all, which is another reason it's important to know your company. Carpenter says his company's after-hours rate is $40 more than their standard rate, but they waive that additional fee if the customer has an annual $149 home comfort service agreement. The agreement includes an A/C inspection in the spring, a furnace cleaning in the fall, a plumbing inspection with a water heater flush, and 10 percent off any additional services. "We're a 24/7 company and we want to offer our customers the best services possible," he says. "These issues don't just happen 8 to 5."

Ward says even though you might be overwhelmed with the problem, inquire about the rate for the given day and time to avoid surprises. "Do you know how many unscrupulous companies might have really tried to take advantage of me?" she says, noting that she expected a bill three times the $200 she paid for her Christmas Eve rescue. "I should have asked about the rate, but part of me just really didn't want to know. I was so relieved they could come help."

Ways to hold down winter energy costs

By ALAN J. HEAVENS
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Where does the time go?

Just when you finally get the central air-conditioning working well enough to make the house comfortable, cold weather threatens to show up.

Here are some ideas that might help cut your energy costs this winter, courtesy of Sunnova, the solar-power company:

Does your house really need hot water when no one's home? Probably not. Consider installing a timer on your water heater, to turn it off when you're not there.

Use cold water instead of hot when washing clothes. The EPA's Energy Star program says almost 90 percent of the energy consumed by washing machines goes to heating the water.

Put electronics—your computer, for example—in sleep or hibernation mode when you're not using them.

Unplug certain electronics and appliances to avoid their consuming "phantom power," which means they're still sucking in energy from the outlet even though they aren't in use.

Cut as much as 50 percent of energy consumed to prepare a meal by putting a slow cooker and microwave to work, rather than a range and oven.

If you are going to use the stovetop, match the pan size to the diameter of the heating element, to eliminate wasted heat. A 6-inch pan on an 8-inch burner can waste more than 40 percent of the energy delivered by the appliance.

To improve refrigerator efficiency, consider one with a bottom freezer, keep the fridge between 36 and 38 degrees Fahrenheit and the freezer between zero and 5 degrees, and be sure to defrost ice build-up thicker than a 0.25 inch.

Sunnova recommends a home assessment to determine whether your house is properly insulated and to make certain air isn't escaping. It's also important to keep doors closed and to heat only rooms where you need it.

Depending on the type, a home's heating system can use anywhere from 100 kWh to 3,500 kWh each month. Minimize usage by regularly replacing filters, insulating ducts, and considering a programmable thermostat that will help heat only when and where needed.

COMFORT FOOD

Easy Christmas Stollen

Ricotta cheese adds richness and moisture to this sweet bread.

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons butter or margarine (1 stick)
1 cup ricotta cheese
1/2 cup candied lemon peel or coarsely chopped red candied cherries
1/2 cup dark seedless raisins
1/3 cup slivered blanched almonds, toasted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated lemon peel
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 large egg yolk

1. Heat oven to 325 F. Grease large cookie sheet. In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. With pastry blender or two knives used scissor-fashion, cut in 6 tablespoons butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. With spoon, stir in ricotta until mixture is moistened. Stir in candied lemon peel, raisins, almonds, vanilla, grated lemon peel, egg and egg yolk until well mixed.

2. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface; gently knead dough 2 or 3 times to mix. With floured rolling pin, roll dough into 10-inch-by-8-inch oval. Fold oval lengthwise almost in half, so that edges do not quite meet.

3. Place stollen on prepared cookie sheet. Bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, about 1 hour. Transfer to wire rack. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter and brush over warm stollen. Cool completely. Makes 12 servings.

* Each serving: About 298 calories, 14g total fat (7g saturated), 7g protein, 38g carbohydrate, 67mg cholesterol, 211mg sodium.

For hundreds of triple-tested Good Housekeeping recipes, visit our Web site at www.goodhousekeeping.com. ***(Hearst Communications, Inc.)***

The Garden Bug
Sage
Herbs named for Mary, mother of Jesus
Marjoram — known as Mother of God's Flower
Bee balm, lemon balm — known as Sweet Mary
Catnip — known as Mary's Nettle
Sage — known as Mary's shawl
Dandelion — known as Mary's Bitter Sorrow
Source: campus.udayton.edu/
— Brenda Weaver

© 2015 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

Life & Style

'Force Awakens' carpet includes Stormtroopers, droids and stars

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The next generation of "Star Wars" films kicked off with an elaborate debut for "The Force Awakens" Monday that served as a proverbial passing of the lightsaber to new groups of fighters dueling in a cinematic galaxy far, far away.

"The Force Awakens" premiere had familiar elements for a "Star Wars" event: Stormtroopers marched and droids rolled down the red carpet. Later, Carrie Fisher joked for cameras and Harrison Ford and Lupita Nyong'o reflected on the next phase of the franchise.

The world's first screening of the seventh "Star Wars" film attracted a constellation of stars, including Spike Lee, Jon Favreau, Janelle Monae, Elizabeth Banks and Sofia Vergara. While many opted for chic red carpet attire, Joseph Gordon-Levitt showed up dressed as Jedi master Yoda.

John Williams' soaring score played in a massive opaque tent that built on years of secrecy surrounding the film, which some expect to break box office records when it is released on Friday.

At one point, Fisher turned the microphone on her co-star, Oscar Isaac, and conducted an interview that included her dropping an expletive.

Ford reflected on the impact of the film and the role that catapulted him to superstardom.

"Well, in the '70s nobody knew what to anticipate," Ford said in an interview with Starwars.com. "Nobody had ever seen anything like it. Now we have to live up to what the first films delivered."

Before the film's human stars arrived, the droid BB-8 rolled by the cameras. The soccerball-esque droid has been a popular fixture in trailers for the seventh "Star Wars" film, and it was soon joined by series mainstays C-3PO and R2-D2.

Despite being in charge of "The Force Awakens" for the past three years, director J.J. Abrams seemed overwhelmed by the magnitude of the premiere.

"It's very surreal. I've never seen this kind of thing," he told Starwars.com. "It's insane. I feel enormously guilty for this community, this neighborhood."

The carpet melded classic "Star Wars" figures with the new generation that will carry the weight of two more sequels, video games, comic books, toys and other merchandise.

Abrams and Lucas posed together for photos, and both men took time to chat with fans before heading into the premiere. Original trilogy cast members Mark Hamill and Billy Dee Williams attended, as did series newcomers Max von Sydow, Gwendolyn Christie, John Boyega and Daisy Ridley.

Disney took over a half-mile section of Hollywood Boulevard for the premiere, where the film was screening at three theaters. Some 5,000 invited guests would see the characters Luke Skywalker, Leia Organa and Han Solo reunite for the first time on the big screen since 1983's "Return of the Jedi."

In bleachers set up on the boulevard, some fans dressed as X-Wing pilots while others donned outfits from new "The Force Awakens" characters.

For those without tickets to the premiere, the most they could see was the outside of the tent.

"We're really disappointed because we are big Star Wars fans, and we were hoping to at least see a little of the celebrities," said Natalie Arnet, a tourist from Paris.

"I understand the need for security," Arnet said.

But for a lifelong "Star Wars" fan, it was tough being that close to the premiere and not getting a better look. "I wanted to see the old cast members because I grew up with these films," she said.

Actors Chadwick Boseman and Sarah Hyland, and director Steven Spielberg were among the Hollywood stars who attended what could be the largest Hollywood premiere ever. One of the participating theaters—the iconic TCL Chinese—hosted the premiere of the original "Star Wars" in 1977.

Spielberg praised the "Star Wars" franchise, saying he knew when the first film was released that it would be an enduring hit. "It was a slow burn, but I knew it would never go away," Spielberg told Starwars.com.

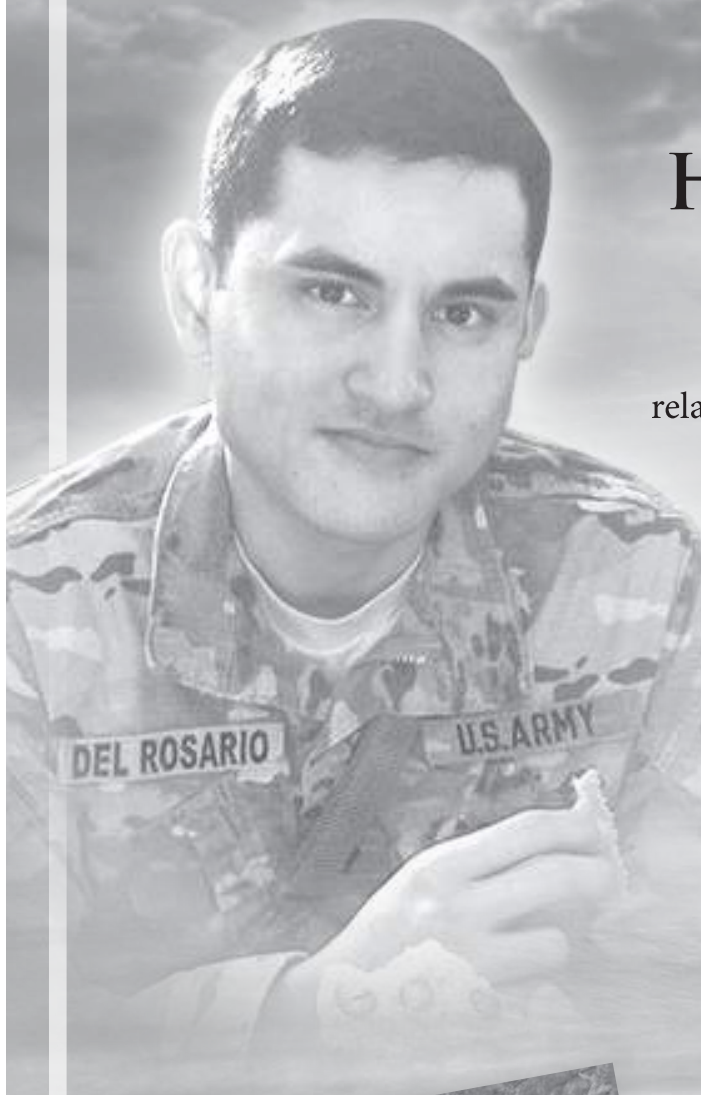
AP
Stormtroopers march on the red carpet at the world premiere of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" at the TCL Chinese Theatre on Monday, Dec. 14, 2015, in Los Angeles.

In Memory of Our Beloved

We, the family of the late

†CHRISTOPHER HENRY MANALO DEL ROSARIO,

would like to invite all our families, relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the first year death anniversary of our beloved's passing unto eternal life.



Nightly masses will be offered at San Antonio Church at 6pm beginning December 16, 2015 to December 24, 2015, except on Sunday, December 20, 2015, when mass will be offered at 8:00am. On the final day, Thursday, December 24, 2015, Eucharistic Celebration will be at 6pm.

A heartfelt gratitude from

Svetlana Sasamoto Del Rosario,
Londan Christopher Del Rosario,
Savannah Del Rosario
Del Rosario & Sasamoto Family

Merriam-Webster declares 'ism' as word of the year for 2015

NEW YORK (AP)—Merriam-Webster has picked a small but powerful suffix as word of the year: ism.

But not just any ism. The top isms to earn high traffic spikes and big bumps in lookups on the dictionary company's website in 2015 over the year before are socialism, fascism, racism, feminism, communism, capitalism and terrorism.

"We had a lot on our minds this year," mused Peter Sokolowski, the Springfield, Massachusetts-based company's editor at large, in a recent interview. "It's a serious year. These are words of ideas and practices. We're educating ourselves."

Pinpointing reasons why words go on the run at Merriam-Webster is an educated guess. The dictionary company tracks corresponding news events to link lookups to real life. And its researchers also crunch data in a way that filters out common words frequently looked up year after year after year when making their top annual choices.

Lookups for fascism corresponded to release of video in November showing a white police officer shooting a black teenager in Chicago, and the criminal charges that followed. Merriam-Webster also saw a stronger correlation in heavy traffic on its site for that word and "fascist" and flash points in Republican Donald Trump's presidential campaign, including reports on his anti-Islam rhetoric.

The isms often collide, driving each other in popularity, Sokolowski said.

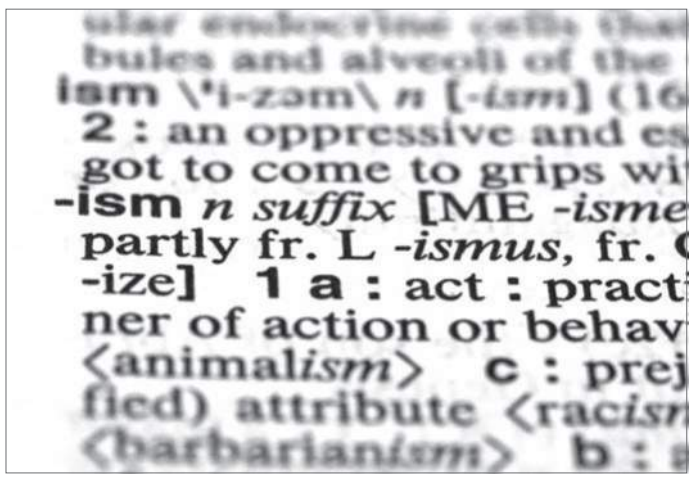
"Fascism we more closely associate as the response to various acts of terrorism. After the attacks in Paris and the attacks in Colorado Springs and in San Bernardino, and because of Donald Trump's proposal to ban Muslims, we then see the word fascism spike," he said.

Lookups of racism were high all year but had two noticeable spikes, one after the South Carolina church shootings and another amid the University of Missouri protests.

Sokolowski, a lexicographer by training, said one spike in lookups for feminism came in April and corresponded with reports on an Ohio middle school student who wore a T-shirt with the word printed on it in a school photo, only to have it digitally blacked out by school administrators. The school later apologized.

Reports on Caitlyn Jenner, Amy Schumer and Hillary Clinton all included discussion of feminism, as did reviews of the film "Mad Max: Fury Road" and chatter about previews of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

In addition, Emma Watson's 2014 UN speech made the news again twice this year; first for inspiring Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai to call herself a feminist in a viral video, and again when it was revealed that Watson was asked not to use the word at all in the speech,


ism \'i-zəm\ n [-ism] (16
2 : an oppressive and
got to come to grips wi
-ism n suffix [ME -isme
partly fr. L -ismus, fr.
-ize] 1 a : act : pract
ner of action or behav
⟨animalism⟩ c : prej
fied) attribute ⟨racism
⟨barbarianism⟩ b :

AP
The suffix "ism" is photographed in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, in New York, Monday, Dec. 14, 2015.

Sokolowski noted.

The word socialism has Bernie Sanders to thank for its popularity.

"The big spikes have been associated with the fact that we have a presidential candidate who identifies as a Democratic Socialist," Sokolowski said.

"We saw that even though socialism was in the Top 10 of the most looked-up words in the whole history of the site, it increased in a spike beginning in late July when Bernie Sanders had a multicity rally that was organized through social media and attracted about 100,000 people in 3,000 communities or more around the country."

In October, lookups for socialism spiked again during the first Democratic debate featuring Sanders and Clinton.

John Morse, president and publisher of Merriam-Webster, said socialism led the ism charge after a strong showing in 2012, but the company decided to go with the broader suffix instead as word of the year "because it was hard not see a bigger story staring us in the face, which was the profusion of ism words all over the most frequently looked-up list."

Other ism words on the move at Merriam-Webster.com this year were professionalism, masochism, federalism, pragmatism, existentialism, hedonism and Marxism.

Other words that sent people to the site in high numbers include marriage, hypocrite, respect, inspiration and minion. The company does not release raw numbers of lookups.

"Inspiration still kind of baffles us," Morse said. "I can't really tell you what it is in the world of 2015 that is so much different from '14 that inspiration has moved up."

The company began picking a word of the year in 2003. It went with "culture" in 2014.

This year's word of the year at Dictionary.com is identity. The folks at Oxford Dictionaries went with a pictograph, an emoji called the "Face with Tears of Joy."

Serena Williams honored as SI's Sportsperson of the Year

NEW YORK (AP)—Serena Williams is Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year—the first female athlete honored on her own by the magazine in more than 30 years.

Williams came within two matches of tennis' first calendar-year Grand Slam since 1988, a bid that ended with a semifinal loss at the U.S. Open.

In all, the 34-year-old American went 53-3 during 2015 with five titles, including at the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon. Williams was No. 1 in the WTA rankings all season.

"She was the most deserving person for the award. She had an amazing year. The way she won her events; the fact that she's done this for so many years at such a high level," said Paul Fichtenbaum, editor of the Sports Illustrated Group. "She was a terrific candidate in a year of terrific candidates."

The cover photo of Williams—in high heels, sitting on a throne—was "her idea, intended ... to express her own ideal of femininity, strength, power," managing editor Christian Stone wrote on SI.com.

Monday's announcement marks a switch to the formal name of the SI award; past recipients were touted as Sportsman or Sportswoman of the Year.

"We just felt this was a natural evolution. ... We're not making a huge deal out of it," Fichtenbaum said. "It just feels like the right time to make the change."

Runner Mary Decker in 1983 was the last female athlete to earn the magazine's award by herself.

The U.S. women's national soccer team was picked by SI in 1999; speedskater Bonnie Blair in 1994 and gymnast Mary Lou Retton in 1984 were co-honorees with male Olympians. In 2011, Tennessee women's basketball coach Pat Summitt shared the award with Duke men's coach Mike Krzyzewski.

"Men's sports has dominated until recently, when women's sports has grown in popularity, and the competition is better than ever," Fichtenbaum said. "There's more of a focus on women's sports now. It's grown considerably. Specifically why? I'm not sure."

Ferragamo revisits Marilyn's pump in capsule collection

MILAN (AP)—When Marilyn Monroe ordered pumps from Salvatore Ferragamo in the 1940s, she had a special request, the shoemaker's grandson revealed. One heel was slightly higher than the other, enhancing her famed wiggle.

A new capsule collection for Salvatore Ferragamo by the luxury Colombian shoe designer Edgardo Osorio reaches back into the company archives to revisit Hollywood's Golden era, when the young shoemaker from southern Italy built his business by making shoes for films and then winning over actors and actresses as customers to his Hollywood Boot Shop.

Ferragamo quickly became known as "shoemaker to the stars," pioneering the powerful link between fashion and the booming film industry.

Those customers included Judy Garland, Mae West and Monroe, said Ferragamo's grandson James, the brand's accessory product director. He said Monroe bought the iconic pumps in the 1940s from a shop on Madison Avenue in New York City for $45 a pair, and has the receipt to prove it.

"The Marilyn Monroe walk required a modification to have that wiggle effect," Ferragamo said, saying one heel was several millimeters higher than the other.

AP
In this photo taken Thursday, Dec. 3, 2015, Ferragamo shoes are displayed in Milan, Italy.

For the capsule collection released in time for the holiday season, Osorio, who started designing shoes at Ferragamo before launching his own Florence-based brand Aquazzura, created a contemporary Marilyn-inspired pump with sheer netted panels for a sexy reveal. He also referenced the famed 1938 Judy Garland "Rainbow" wedge with a steep stiletto heel and a feathery winged rainbow accent on the ankles.

"It is not literal at all," said Massimiliano Giornetti, Ferragamo's creative director. "At the same time, it has the same spirit and the same approach that Salvatore Ferragamo had for developing the wedge for Judy Garland."

The collection was launched as part of the luxury brand's 100-year anniversary celebration of Ferragamo's connection with Hollywood and is meant to be the first of a series of capsule collections in other areas across the group from jewelry to women's handbags and perhaps menswear, tapping young talent and encouraging experimentation.

While Salvatore Ferragamo imported to Hollywood some of southern Italy's joyful colors and free spirit, Giornetti said Osorio's collection aims to offer looks for women in different moments of the day, from ballet flats with the Ferragamo bow to gladiator sandals and glamorous booties.

The looks are sexy, with stiletto heels and straps that wrap up the calf, but are also meant to be comfortable, featuring lightweight materials like cork, and recalling some of Ferragamo's most recognized style points, from stylized bows to polka dots.

"Edgardo shares with me and the Ferragamo family not only the same aesthetic principals, but also the same sort of lifestyle that is so important to Ferragamo's very dynamic consumer, who is always looking for quality, beautiful Italian craftsmanship and I will also add, an ironic twist," Giornetti said.

Grown men now love Justin Bieber's music, too

NEW YORK (AP)—Most grown men love musical acts like the Black Keys and Kendrick Lamar. Now, you can add Justin Bieber's name to that list.

With his recent batch of hit singles and a semi-grown-up sound—including the electro-pop "Where Are U Now" with DJ-producers Skrillex and Diplo—adult men have begun attending the musical church of Bieber, and while some have issues acknowledging it, others proudly say they're Beliebers.

"You can't deny where Justin Bieber is right now musically. You want to not like him, but you kind of just have to respect it," said Timothy Javier, a 30-year-old nurse from Fort Lee, New Jersey.

Javier said Bieber's new album, "Purpose," reminds him of Justin Timberlake's "Justified," his 2002 solo debut that helped him transition from 'N Sync frontman to a leader of pop music.

The singles "Sorry" and "What Do You Mean?"—currently at Nos. 2 and 4 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart—helped Bieber solidify his comeback after years of a broken image that included arrests, public smoking and fainting onstage that led to hospitalization.

But now, at 21, his music is in the spotlight.

"He dropped an album that was ... solid across the board," said DJ Enuff, a veteran radio personality for New York hip-hop station Hot 97. "There's urban radio stations across the country that play it, there's rhythmic crossover stations that can play it, there's pop stations that can play it."

"Purpose," which features downbeat R&B tracks, ballads and club-worthy anthems, debuted at No.1 and sold an impressive 649,000 equivalent album units in its first week. Skrillex produced a number of the tracks; Ed Sheeran co-wrote the ballad "Love Yourself," a Top 5 hit; and guests include Nas, Big Sean, Travis Scott and newcomer Halsey.

And the Grammy-nominated "Where Are U Now"—first released on the album "Skrillex & Diplo Present Jack U" in February—helped Bieber achieve his first Top 10 hit since 2012's "Beauty and a Beat."

Some fans were surprised when they learned it was Bieber singing smoothly on the song.

"I kept asking my girlfriend, 'Who is that guy? I keep hearing his voice.' She didn't even know until we actually had to go through the radio station's playlist to find out it was Justin Bieber," said 33-year-old Ennis Iheme of Jersey City, New Jersey, who works in rail service operations. "I'm a Justin Bieber fan now."

Others say they're surprised they enjoy Bieber's new sound and are coming to terms with being Bieber fans.

"I think grown men have a problem with the term 'Belieber,'" said Paul Costabile, a host at iHeartRadio. "We're like, 'Can we be OK with Justin Bieber ...?' And now we all are I think."

Bieber released his debut EP in 2009 at 15, and before this year, he'd been best known for the bubble gum-pop jam "Baby," despite releasing other hits.

DJ Enuff said Bieber is accepted among older fans because he's grown up and entered a new chapter in his life.

"A lot of male listeners we have at our station wouldn't even touch a Justin Bieber record. But now ... we're playing Justin Bieber records and no one's even questioning it," he said. "It's part of the format."

AP
In this Monday, Dec. 7, 2015 file photo, Canadian singer Justin Bieber performs live during a small concert for charity in Toronto.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Prince Harry sees mother's legacy on visit to HIV hospital

LONDON (AP)—Prince Harry has followed in his mother's footsteps by meeting patients and staff at a hospital for people with HIV. The prince on Monday visited London's Mildmay Hospital, previously an AIDS hospice where Princess Diana met dying patients. Fundraising director Kerry Reeves-Kneip told Harry that his mother had visited 17 times before her death in 1997, helping to break down the stigma surrounding the disease. She said Diana made three public visits and more private ones, where she would meet patients, "take tea and cakes with the staff, and gossip. She gave a lot of comfort and love to the people here." Harry recalled how it had been "a huge deal" when Diana kissed an AIDS patient at the hospice. Mildmay now focuses on rehabilitation for people with HIV-related illnesses.

Vegas showgirl spectacle Jubilee to end after 30-plus years

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The showgirls of the long-running Las Vegas spectacle Jubilee are hanging up their elaborate headdresses. Caesars Entertainment announced Sunday that the show at Bally's Las Vegas casino-hotel would end Feb. 11. Jubilee got its start in 1981. It's the longest-running show currently on the Strip. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority citing UNLV records says the Folies Bergere showgirl show was the longest running show at 50 years before it ended in 2009. Caesars has said hundreds of thousands of Swarovski crystals were used on the costumes when the show debuted 34 years ago. The show had recently been reimagined to coincide with renovations at Bally's Las Vegas, including a tower of hotel rooms dubbed the Jubilee Tower. The company says it's considering a new show featuring showgirls.

Josh Groban eyes Broadway, says he's in that 'headspace'

NEW YORK (AP)—Josh Groban will be following up his album of Broadway standards by doing it for real—singing on a Broadway stage for the first time.

"I was kind of in that headspace to begin with," Groban said Monday. "There was this nice stars-aligning-thing happening."

Groban will play Pierre in "Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812," a musical by Dave Malloy that dramatizes a 70-page melodrama at the center of Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace." It starts on Broadway in September.

Groban has been offered parts on Broadway before but timing never worked out. This time, he'll be ending a tour in support of an album "Stages," for which he just earned a Grammy Award nomination for best traditional pop vocal album that coincidentally has him singing musical theater hits from "The Phantom of the Opera," ''Les Misérables," ''Into The Woods" and "A Chorus Line," among others.

Since he made his debut in 2001, Groban's soaring anthems and soothing yet stirring ballads have sold millions of albums.

The sung-through musical "Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812" premiered at New York City's Ars Nova in 2012 and is currently playing at the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University.

He caught an off-Broadway version in 2013 and vowed that if he ever returned to his musical theater roots it would be for "the right piece of music."

Rachel Chavkin, who has directed previous versions of the show, is directing the new Broadway-bound version. Additional casting, design team and theater will be announced later. (Phillipa Soo, who played a dynamite Natasha, is currently in "Hamilton.")

By the time the "Great Comet" makes it to New York again, it will have changed a great deal since its earlier off-Broadway lives, which included strobe lights, actors racing about and smoke pouring as dance music competed with traditional Russian folk music.

The show reached for an immersive experience by trying to erase the line between audience and performer. A full Russian-themed meal—including vodka—was served and audience members were asked to pass along love letters or interact with actors.

Groban said he was "totally transfixed" by the intimate production when he saw it and wants to "pass along that magic." On Broadway, stage designer Mimi Lien will put many seats onstage, let actors move around the theater and there will be some sort of food and drink on offer.

The show centers on a bright young thing, Natasha, who falls for one man, only to be seduced later by another.

Woman who wants implants must ignore boyfriend's threats

DEAR ABBY: I have always struggled with a lack of self-esteem and confidence. I would like to get breast implants. It's not to seek attention or anything; it's merely to feel better about myself. Clothes don't fit me properly, and I am embarrassed.

My boyfriend is completely against it. He says he doesn't want to be with a fake person, even though I have tried in vain to tell him I'll be the same person on the inside. He has also threatened that we will have relationship problems if I have the surgery done.

This procedure will, in my opinion, help me in many ways. On the other hand, I don't want to lose my boyfriend! Please help.

DOESN'T WANT TO LOSE HIM

DEAR DOESN'T WANT TO LOSE HIM: Which is more important to you—to do something that will make you feel more confident about your appearance or hang onto this boyfriend? He may be worried that you will attract too much attention if you change your appearance, or have a hang-up about "relations" with a woman who has implants.

If he were your husband, I might answer differently, but from where I sit, you have to do what's best for you. A boyfriend who would prevent you from boosting your self-confidence strikes me as selfish and not much of a "friend" at all.

DEAR ABBY: I'm saddened by the mistresses of today, also known as "side chicks." These women have no morality or conscience. Yet their status seems to be glorified all over social media.

What advice would you give to my friends who are contemplating joining in this madness as a "hustle" and a way to get child support from married men?

DISGUSTED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR DISGUSTED: You are describing entrapment and extortion. A woman who would do this is lacking ethics, morals and self-respect. That kind of individual isn't likely to listen to advice from me. I do have some, however, for YOU. End those "friendships" because, on an important level, you have nothing in common with these shameless users. I pity the children, who are nothing more than meal tickets to their mothers.

DEAR ABBY: I am vegan, which makes dining out an adventure. In restaurants, veggies and pasta or a veggie wrap are pretty much a go-to. At family functions (weddings, showers), I bring my own non-dairy milk and butter and try not to call attention to myself. When someone (inevitably) notices, the questions begin, which I don't mind.

What I DO mind, however, is the hostility I encounter. "What makes you think you're better than the rest of us?" is the most common comment. I don't think I am, and I certainly have never implied it.

I need a response that won't fuel the fire and will hopefully allow me to eat in peace. Thoughts?

VEGAN GIRL IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR VEGAN GIRL: Try this: "I'm sorry you got that impression, because it's not the way I feel. It's simply the way I choose to eat."

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

GALAXOID AND NEBULAR!
THIS COLD WHITE GLOP COVERS US AND FREEZES OUR INNARDS!
IT'S SNOW. YOU'D BETTER GET USED TO IT, 'CAUSE WE GET IT EVERY WINTER.
YOU DID NOT TELL US THAT THIS PLANETS AXIS WOULD TILT US AWAY FROM THE SUN.
YOU DIDN'T ASK.
WE PAID SO LEAVES FOR THIS PLANET! YOU GREATLY OVERCHARGED US!
YEAH WELL, LET THE BUYER BEWARE.
YOU ARE A MOST DISHONORABLE POTENTATE!
WE DEMAND YOU BRING THIS PLANET UP TO CODE!

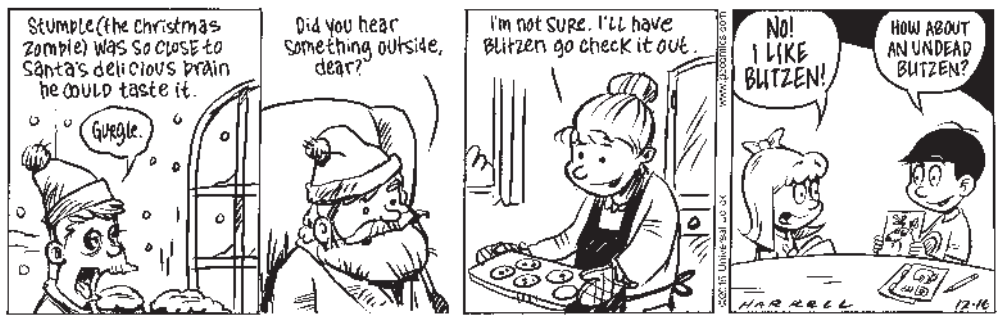
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

WHY IS GARFIELD IN MY CHRISTMAS TREE, LIZ?
JIM DAVIS 12-16
LOTS OF CATS DO THAT, JON...THEY LIKE BRIGHT, SHINY THINGS
AND THE SIGNAL IS BETTER UP HERE

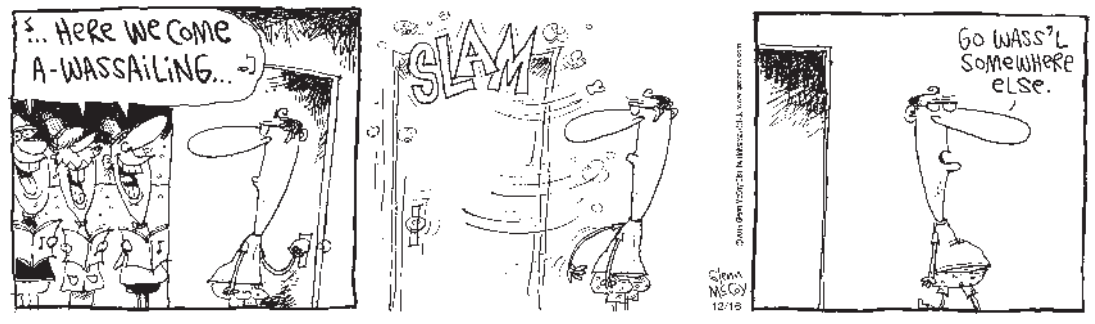
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


Stumble (the Christmas zombie) was so close to Santa's delicious brain he could taste it.
Gurgle.
Did you hear something outside, dear?
I'm not sure. I'll have Blitzen go check it out.
NO! I LIKE BLITZEN!
HOW ABOUT AN UNDEAD BLITZEN?

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

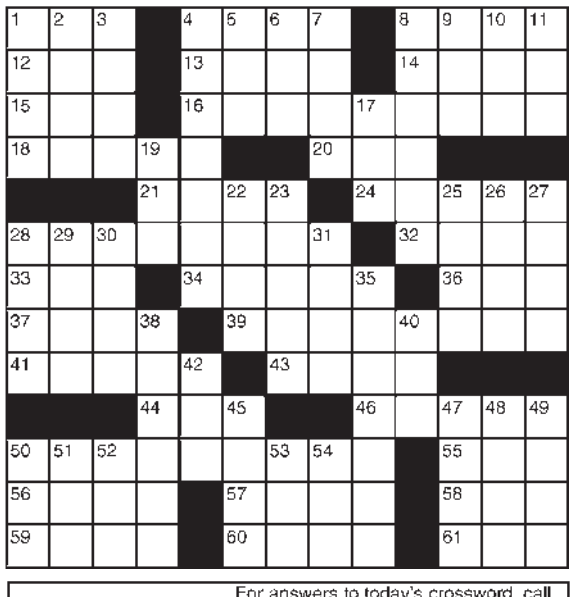
ACROSS
1 Skillet
4 Baby powder
8 Buddies
12 Poetic "before"
13 Swear words?
14 "This is bad ..."
15 Movie buys, briefly
16 Stephen King novel
18 Montezuma, e.g.
20 Tablet add-on
21 Luau fish, for short
24 Helpers
28 Stephen King novel
32 Allay
33 Old Mideast gp.
34 Thin as —
36 Jokester
37 Finger jewelry
39 Stephen King novel
41 Refrigerant
43 Linen hue
44 Greek cross
46 Make wiser
50 Stephen King novel
55 Spanish "rah"
56 Java setting
57 — moss
58 Skin art, for short
59 Serene
60 Crash site?
61 Blackbird

DOWN
1 Anti-fur gp.
2 Nev. neighbor
3 Teller's call
4 Bach composition
5 "Feels good!"
6 Env. filler
7 Potted "pet"
8 Meal with a crust
9 Sashimi fish
10 Chilling Chaney
11 That ship
17 Sauna site
19 German river
22 Mata —
23 Kooky
25 Sunrise
26 Morales of "Jericho"
27 Dreamcast co.
28 Surf and —
29 Head locks?
30 Sea bird
31 Frisbee, e.g.
35 Swit who played "Hot Lips"
38 Pep rally cheer
40 Bad coffee
42 '60s war zone
45 Snail mail org.
47 Speck
48 Spanish custard
49 Elusive snowman
50 Pouch
51 Free — bird
52 — Abner
53 Summer sign
54 Klutz

Solution time: 23 mins.

M	E	A	D	■	P	H	E	W	■	G	P	A
S	A	R	A	■	R	O	L	E	■	H	A	P
G	R	E	Y	G	O	O	S	E	■	E	S	P
■	■	■	J	U	D	D	■	D	I	C	T	S
W	E	G	O	■	■	■	S	O	A	K	■	■
A	R	A	B	■	I	M	H	U	N	G	H	Y
R	M	N	■	O	R	E	I	T	■	O	O	O
M	A	G	I	C	I	A	N	■	N	D	A	K
■	■	■	G	F	■	S	■	■	M	I	S	D	O
B	E	R	R	A	■	S	E	E	M	■	■	■
A	L	E	■	G	O	O	D	G	R	A	V	Y
S	S	E	■	O	R	A	N	■	O	D	I	E
K	E	N	■	N	A	P	A	■	D	A	M	S

Yesterday's answer 12-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hallee Hirsh, 28; Krysten Ritter, 34; Benjamin Bratt, 52; Sam Robards, 54.

Happy Birthday: Your charm will lead to advancement, but overreacting could cause you to miscalculate matters. Find a balance that allows you to put your best effort into whatever you do without showing off or attracting opposition. It's how you handle people that will make a difference in what you achieve this year. What you put out is what you'll get back in return. Your numbers are 3, 12, 14, 24, 31, 36, 42.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Money matters can be cleared up. Don't let what someone else has to say or do set you off. Arguing will not help you get ahead or make you feel better. Learn from past experiences. An interview looks promising. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Discuss matters that have been bothering you. Partnerships will benefit from honest discussions, leading to solutions that suit everyone involved. Favors will be granted for your efforts. Make someone an offer that will bring you closer together. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You'll be disillusioned by the suggestions made by a colleague, friend or employer. Don't be too eager to agree to do something before you have all the fine details in writing. Your can-do attitude will lead to impulsive mistakes. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Positive actions will bring stellar results. Shopping for a special gift or spending money on your appearance will pay off. A unique relationship with someone who is different than you will be enlightening. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't lend or borrow money or possessions. Bring about changes at home that will add to your comfort and bring you greater stability. You don't have to pay the expenses of others. Offer your time, not your money, if someone is asking for help. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't sulk or refuse to take part in events or activities because something doesn't go your way. Step outside your comfort zone and offer intelligent, honest suggestions. Your participation will encourage others to see the value you bring. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take the plunge and do something you've always wanted to do. Check out travel deals or attend a festive gathering. Being a part of the action will result in greater confidence and new friends. Share your thoughts with like-minded people. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Emotional matters will escalate if you don't make your position clear. Trying to spare someone's feelings or avoid opposition will not bring about the changes you wish to see. Evaluate your situation and do what needs to be done. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Your desire for change and adventure will get you into financial trouble. Don't make plans you cannot afford. Uncertainty should be your signal to step back and wait for better opportunities. Indulgence will be your downfall. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Let others come to you. Be wary of attracting people who are indecisive or who want to place restrictions on your plans. Avoid dealing with financial, legal or medical institutions. Make time for romance. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Look for a way to give back to your community. Volunteering to help an organization, school or hospital will be satisfying and give you an idea for future projects. A gift, winning or money from an unusual source looks promising. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Lay out some plans and options for someone you love, and work as a team to decide what you want to do in the future. Plan a romantic getaway or make a promise to share more time and activities with one another. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are strong, stubborn and outgoing. You are progressive and impulsive.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			7	6	9			
		1				3		
	7	5				2	4	
7								2
5								3
	1	3	5		8	6	7	
			1		3			
		8				9		
		7	8	4	2	5		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	3	6	4	8	1	5	9	7
4	7	8	5	6	9	2	3	1
9	5	1	2	3	7	4	8	6
5	1	3	6	9	4	8	7	2
8	2	9	3	7	5	6	1	4
6	4	7	1	2	8	9	5	3
1	6	4	9	5	3	7	2	8
3	8	5	7	4	2	1	6	9
7	9	2	8	1	6	3	4	5

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/9

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ AND HERITAGE FESTIVAL Sol.: 9 letters

S	P	V	Y	B	A	S	K	E	T	S	E	U	L	B
T	O	E	R	N	I	T	A	L	E	E	A	P	O	L
E	T	N	L	A	S	N	N	G	J	K	C	O	R	U
K	T	D	E	A	R	E	A	E	A	A	T	S	O	E
C	E	O	W	L	G	T	I	S	T	H	S	T	G	G
I	R	R	E	O	S	N	I	C	S	S	M	E	N	R
T	Y	S	J	U	C	I	I	S	A	A	D	R	A	A
O	R	Q	C	I	B	R	S	A	A	C	P	I	M	S
U	T	U	A	S	S	S	A	O	P	N	I	U	K	S
R	N	A	J	I	T	D	C	W	L	P	S	L	A	L
I	U	R	U	A	A	P	O	F	F	I	E	U	E	A
S	O	E	N	N	E	A	N	O	C	I	V	P	R	D
Ⓜ	C	D	C	A	S	I	G	L	F	A	S	U	A	L
Ⓐ	S	E	B	U	C	N	O	K	G	O	C	H	A	Y
Ⓨ	A	Y	L	L	I	T	N	E	G	A	L	L	I	V

©2015 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com Download the Wordamaze Game App 12/16

Acts, Acura, Artisans, Baskets, Bluegrass, Blues, Booths, Cajun, Congo, Country, Crawfish, Cubes, Dance, Delicacies, Folk, Food, Gentilly, Gospel, Jewelry, Kids Tent, Lagniappe, Latin, Los Islenos, Louisiana, Mango, May, Music, Paint, Pass, Poster, Pottery, Rock, Sauvage, Seats, Shake, Square, Stages, Stands, Tents, Tickets, Tourism, Vendors, Village

Yesterday's Answer: Versace

Treasury 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contain 130 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Local Couple Seeking Surrogate

If you are female between the ages of 21 and 40, have had at least one natural child birth, and are interested in learning more about being a surrogate, please call Karen @ 783-1367. Compensation is over $22,000.

Or receive $500 for referral of qualified candidates.

www.saipantribune.com

Warehouse for RENT

REM LOWERBASE

Warehouse #3 - Size: 6,000sq/ft
$0.65 per sq/ft. Negotiable

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 235-6527/28 or 285-1317

LOOKING FOR

Office/Warehouse Manager: Manage the storage, delivery, set-up, repair, instruction-in-use, and pick-up of home medical equipment. Company will provide all required training. Basic MS Word and Excel, Good customer service. Driver's license. PT/FT Pay and position will be based on experience.

Email or send resume:
rob@vetshi.com

G4S

Job Vacancy Announcement

(21) Security Officer

Submit applications, police clearance, and copy of certification at G4S Office located at Beach Road Ladera Building, Chalan Lau-lau.
For more information call (670) 233-3238/39 or email at cnmi@gu.g4s.com
www.g4s.mp

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY: G4S is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Employer and observes all federal employment opportunity regulations, practices and policies. Federal Law requires presentation of proof of identity and eligibility to work in the United States. We comply with this law on a nondiscriminatory basis. Must be 18 years or older and must be able to speak, read and write English. Open to all qualified U.S. Workers without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex citizenship and is in compliance with Title II of the Genetics Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA). This job is open to all U.S. Veterans, Persons with Disabilities and Women In Non-traditional occupations that are qualified, willing, able and available to perform the job.

WESTERN SALES TRADING COMPANY
has opening for:

Two (2) Wholesale Account Supervisor

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a major in Marketing, Finance, or Management (may be foreign equivalent) and two (2) years experience in the job offered or in a supervisory wholesale sales or marketing position with duties that included directly handling major and key customer accounts; gathering and analysis of market data, prices and costs; and preparing feasibility studies for expansion into new product lines and markets.

Duties: Negotiates sales contracts and maintains and handles major and key customer accounts. Establishes and maintains customer relationship with retailers and establishes business contacts with prospective customers. Coordinates and supervises sales activities and provides training to sales staff. Performs feasibility analyses and cost assessments for expansion into new product lines and market areas. Monitors market trends and gathers data about competitors and analyzes their prices, sales, and method of marketing and distribution. Makes recommendations to management on new product lines, pricing of current and new products and action plans to optimize the company's sales. Assists in preparing business and sales forecast. Performs other related duties.

If interested, send resume to Western Sales Trading Company by email to wstcospn@pticom.com or by fax at 670-322-9408. Proof of qualifications and police clearance required within three days of hire.

Customers First
TRIPLE J

TRIPLE J SAIPAN, INC.

Immediate position available for

LIVE-IN CAREGIVER FOR THE U.S.

- Round trip airfare
- Health care experience prefered but not required
- Must be able to prepare food items
- Salary negotiable based on experience

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. citizen or Green card
- Driver's license
- Ability to speak English
- Police Clearance
- References

Drop off your resume at the
Triple J Corporate Office, Ground Floor, Surfrider Resort Hotel & Surf Club Brigida St., Chalan Kanoa
May submit resume at the
corpoffice@triplejsaipan.com
We accept applications up to September 30. 2015
NO PHONE CALL PLEASE

Triple J is an equal opportunity employer.

WHISPERING PALMS SCHOOL

Mid-Year Elementary Teaching Position has opened at Whispering Palms School on Navy Hill. We are looking for a full-time teacher for our multi-grade primary class (K-2) of 10 students to start on January 11, 2016. Qualified candidates should have an elementary teaching credential and preferably 2+ years of classroom teaching experience. If you are interested, please call 323-7451 or email your resume to: whisperingpalmsofsaipan@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ACHUGAO SERVICES, LLC

Information Technology Manager

Job Purpose: Our Information Technology Manager is responsible for the oversight of the IT department. IT Management responsibilities include establishing and maintaining technical and operational requirements, researching and evaluating solutions to solve the organization's technical challenges and working with other departments to budget and allocate funds for the organization's technical equipment and software needs.

Duties:

- Reporting to the COO of the Saipan office, you will be responsible for managing the operations of the Information Technology department consistent with the budget and business plan
- Assist in the hiring and development of staff that meets the needs and requirements of the Information Technology department.
- Prepare department budget and present/submit to COO and CFO in a timely manner.
- Planning, preparing, and executing high impact meetings with client prospects and potential partners
- Helping with the preparation and translation of our marketing collaterals in to Chinese
- Maximizing revenue growth with existing accounts and our partner base
- Representing Bridge Capital at industry events and conferences

Skills/Qualifications:

- You are able to plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the operations of information systems and electronic data processing (EDP)
- You are able to self-manage and are goal and results driven
- Your interpersonal, oral and written communication, presentation and organizational skills are excellent
- You demonstrate passion, persistence, creativity and a determination to get things done
- You have verifiable success in working in the IT industry
- Experienced in managing Windows Server environment.
- Experienced in Network Administration.
- You are familiar or able to learn our hardware and software systems (Quickbooks, Pontem Software, Quickbase, Propertyware, DNS Management, Cisco IOS, Citrix Go To Products (Assist, My PC, Meeting), Virtualization – HyperV/VMWare, Symantec PGP, Thunderbird, Outlook)
- Knowledgeable in Active Directory and Group/User Policies.
- You have experience in managing Email, Phone and Internet Systems.
- Create or recommends Information Technology strategies, security policies, and procedures.
- An undergraduate degree in Computer Science or similar is ideal
- Excellent command of written and spoken English
- Cisco (CCNA, CCNP), Comptia (A+, Network+, Security +), Microsoft (MTA, MCSA) certifications/licenses preferred.

Email resumes to: hrachugao@gmail.com

Primtek Incorporated

***dba* Primtek Construction**
Office Address: Kannat Tabla Dr. corner Long Lane
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 504921, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 235-0064 • Fax/Phone: (670) 235-3897
Email: primtek.saipan@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Position: **Project Engineer/Civil Engineer**
Salary Offered: $ 17.87/hour
Job Description: Prepares bids, plans, drawings, specifications and construction cost estimates; Estimates quantities and cost of materials, equipment, or labor to determine project feasibility; Ensures equipments and materials are in accordance with contract drawings and specifications; Directs or participate in surveying to lay out installations or establish reference points, grades, or elevations to guide construction; Computes load and grade requirements, water flow rates, or material stress factors to determine design specifications; Monitors and inspects project sites to monitor progress and ensure conformance to design specifications and safety or sanitation standards; Manages and directs the construction, operations, or maintenance activities at project site; Manages document control processes, including change orders, subcontractor billings, field production tracking, purchasing and contract administration; Responsible for project planning, operations and scheduling, resource allocation, project accounting, and control, providing technical direction and ensuring compliance with quality standards; Provides technical advice to industrial or managerial personnel regarding design, construction, or program modifications or structural repairs; Conducts quality control inspections of completed work; and Coordinates with project owners, consultants, architects, engineers, contractors, sub-contractors and concerned government agencies.

Minimum Qualifications: With a college degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. Must have at least 10 years of relevant work experience as a Project Engineer/Civil Engineer in a company that specializes in the construction of commercial and institutional buildings, roads, and related structures.
Special Selection Factors: Must be willing and able to work week-ends, rotating shifts and holidays when required. Employment is contingent upon successful completion of a pre-employment written test and interview.

Place of Employment: Successful candidate will be assigned to work in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

How to Apply: Submit or email a comprehensive professional resume to:

PRIMTEK INCORPORATED
Office Address: Kannat Tabla Dr. corner Long Lane, Saipan, CNMI
Phone: (670) 235-0064
Email: primtek.saipan@gmail.com

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), PRIMTEK INCORPORATED will make reasonable accommodations during any and all phases of the selection process for individuals with a disability. Please call (670) 235-0064 to request accommodations. PRIMTEK INCORPORATED is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or disability.

WHATZIT Solution: Facelift

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
• 5-Liner	$24	$45

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

ELEVATOR

©WHATZIT? © 2015 www.whatzit.com Distributed by Universal Uclick

www.facebook.com/dingbatsgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Beckham scores 2 TDs to help Giants beat Dolphins, 31-24

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)—With the score tied in the fourth quarter, Odell Beckham Jr. somehow slipped 5 yards behind the secondary.

That turned out to be the winning margin for the New York Giants.

Beckham's 84-yard touchdown reception put the Giants ahead to stay with 11 minutes to go, and they forged a three-way tie atop the NFC East by beating the Miami Dolphins 31-24 on Monday night.

New York's Eli Manning went 27 for 31 for 337 yards and four scores. His passer rating of 151.5 was his highest since 2009, and his 87 percent completion percentage was a career best.

The Giants (6-7) broke a three-game losing streak and are tied with the Redskins and Eagles for the lead in their woeful division.

"It's a must-win, a playoff game for us," Beckham said. "They're all playoff games."

The Dolphins (5-8) were mathematically eliminated from the playoff race, extending their postseason drought to a franchise-record seven consecutive years.

"Obviously this is not where we want to be," quarterback Ryan Tannehill said, "but here we are."

In celebration of the franchise's 50th season, the Dolphins introduced their 50 greatest players at halftime. The not-so-great 2015 Dolphins topped 20 points for the first time since October, but couldn't keep up with Beckham.

AP

New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning (10) looks to pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the Miami Dolphins, Monday, Dec. 14, 2015, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

He had seven catches for 166 yards and the game's final two scores. The 100-yard game was his sixth in a row, a Giants record.

"They got it to a star player, and he made plays for them," Dolphins defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh said.

Beckham missed one series when he went to the locker room due to cramps in both calves, but didn't let that slow him down. And with the score 24-all, he took advantage of broken coverage to score the go-ahead touchdown.

Cornerback Jamar Taylor and seldom-used safety Shamiel Gary were the closest defenders, but Manning hit Beckham in stride at midfield and he sprinted to the end zone for his 12th TD this year.

The Giants plotted the play at the team hotel before the game.

"We got the coverage we wanted," Manning said. "We thought it would be a big play, but I didn't think he would be that open."

Miami safety Reshad Jones blamed miscommunication.

"The corner was supposed to follow up and go over the top," Jones said, "which he didn't."

Beckham outplayed his close friend and former LSU teammate, Miami's Jarvis Landry, who made 11 catches for 99 yards but was flagged for a costly personal foul penalty with his team trailing in the fourth quarter.

Beckham made a 45-yard reception to set up a touchdown and had a 6-yard scoring catch. The latter pass was initially ruled incomplete because Beckham was out of bounds, but the decision was overturned by a replay review that made the score 24-all.

His final catch, a diving grab on third down at midfield, sealed the victory with less than two minutes left.

"Obviously his performance is something we all expect," Landry said. "He's just continuing to do what he does."

Manning led a touchdown drive in the final two minutes of the first half covering 80 yards, including 45 on a long pass to Beckham, to make it 17-all. The receiver on the 5-yard pass for the tie: Will Tye.

Tannehill threw for 236 yards and burned a blitz by throwing deep to Kenny Stills for a 47-yard score that put Miami ahead 24-17. But Tannehill overthrew an open Landry behind the Giants' secondary with his team trailing and less than five minutes to go.

"Those are the ones you've got to make," Tannehill said.

The Dolphins were hurt by 12 penalties and seemed reluctant to run the ball, as has been the case most of the year. Lamar Miller rushed for 89 yards, including a darting 38-yard touchdown run after making Jason Pierre-Paul miss, but carried only 12 times.

Bengals' Dalton won't need surgery on broken thumb

CINCINNATI (AP)—Andy Dalton won't need surgery on his broken thumb and could play again this season.

Dalton broke the thumb on his passing hand during a 33-20 loss to the Steelers on Sunday that left the AFC North up for grabs. He had an appointment with a specialist on Monday who recommended that the fracture could heal without surgery.

It's still unclear how many games he'll miss. Dalton's hand will remain in a cast for now.

"Basically we'll go week to week with things," coach Marvin Lewis said. "I think that's about as good an outcome right now as we could expect. He won't play this week. As we move forward, we'll see how he is each week and it'll be up to Andy and the doctors."

AJ McCarron will make his first NFL start Sunday in San Francisco, trying to make an Alabama breakthrough. A quarterback from Alabama hasn't won an NFL game as a starter since Jeff Rutledge in 1987, according to STATS.

McCarron won back-to-back national titles at Alabama. The fifth-round pick in 2014 missed his rookie season with a sore passing shoulder, but played well enough during the preseason to win the job as Dalton's backup.

AP

Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton walks the sideline with a cast on his throwing hand in the first half of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2015, in Cincinnati.

Since Rutledge's win in 1987, Alabama quarterbacks have gone 0-13 in NFL starts.

"That's history," McCarron said on Monday. "I'm not really worried about history. I'm worried about what we have right now."

The Bengals (10-3) haven't clinched their fifth straight playoff spot yet, but they lead the AFC North by two games over Pittsburgh (8-5). New England (11-2) is in line for home-field advantage throughout the playoffs, with the Bengals and Broncos tied for the second spot.

After the game at San Francisco (4-9), the Bengals play at Denver in a game that will go a long way in determining the playoff seeding. They close the season at home against the Ravens (4-9).

It'll be the first time in his five-year career that Dalton misses a start. He missed the second half of a game as a rookie. He's being replaced by a quarterback who hasn't run many plays with the starting offense and had thrown only four passes in a mop-up role before Sunday.

McCarron went 22 of 32 for 280 yards with two touchdowns, three sacks and two interceptions, one of which was returned for a touchdown that put the Steelers in control. He'll practice with the starters this week, and the game plan will be tailored to what he likes to do.

Coordinator Hue Jackson said the offense won't change all that much with McCarron running it.

"Everybody knows where we're going," Jackson said. "Nothing's changed. We're chasing the same goals, the same dreams. We've just got a little different leader right now and that's OK.

"Hopefully we'll be able to get Andy back at some point and we'll move forward. But right now it's AJ McCarron's show and he'll go lead the parade."

Houston's Hoyer suffers second concussion in a month

HOUSTON (AP)—Houston quarterback Brian Hoyer is doubtful for Sunday's AFC South showdown against Indianapolis after suffering his second concussion in less than a month.

Coach Bill O'Brien said Monday that Hoyer is following the league's concussion protocol, and he is also dealing with a strained neck and a wrist problem after being sacked five times in a 27-6 loss to New England.

"He took a beating last night," O'Brien said.

Hoyer missed a game earlier this season after getting a concussion on Nov. 16 against the Bengals. O'Brien was asked if he's more worried about Hoyer's health considering this is his second concussion in less than a month.

"There's nothing more important than the health and safety of every player in that locker room," O'Brien said. "I think that's paramount, that's No. 1. As far as those things go I think obviously it's too early to tell ... whenever you suffer a concussion like that, multiple concussions within a five- or six-week span, obviously the player himself is concerned about that, and nobody's more concerned than I am because of my relationship with Brian and his family."

The upcoming game is an important one for the Texans, who are tied with the Colts for first place in the division.

If he can't go against Indianapolis, the Texans will look to T.J. Yates, who started the last time Hoyer was out and led them to a win. Yates was signed on Oct. 28 following the release of Ryan Mallett, who was let go after missing the team charter to Miami.

Yates said he will be ready to play on Sunday if he's needed and thinks the work he has put in the last few weeks will help him if he has to start.

"It definitely will be a lot easier," he said. "More comfortable with the offense, more comfortable with the operation, the guys I will be throwing to and everything. Everything is just another month ahead."

O'Brien said he spoke to the team on Monday about Yates and the confidence he has in him if they need him on Sunday.

"He's a smart guy," O'Brien said. "He works every hard at it. He prepares like he is the starter. In a situation like this ... I think we have a good guy there to step in because he's a pro and he's got really good poise."

Though the brunt of the criticism for the hits Hoyer took on Sunday night fell on the shoulders of the offensive line, O'Brien made sure to note that those players aren't the only ones who need to improve in order to better protect the quarterback.

"I think everybody's involved in that," O'Brien said. "I think we all have to do better. I think I have to do a better job of helping those guys out with better schemes. They have to play better, they know that. The backs and the tight ends are involved in protecting the quarterback, too. The receivers are involved in getting open better ... we all have to do a better job this week.

Crawford's late 3 in OT lifts Clippers over Pistons

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (AP)—Jamal Crawford hit a 3-pointer with 12.4 seconds left in overtime and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Detroit Pistons 105-103 Monday night.

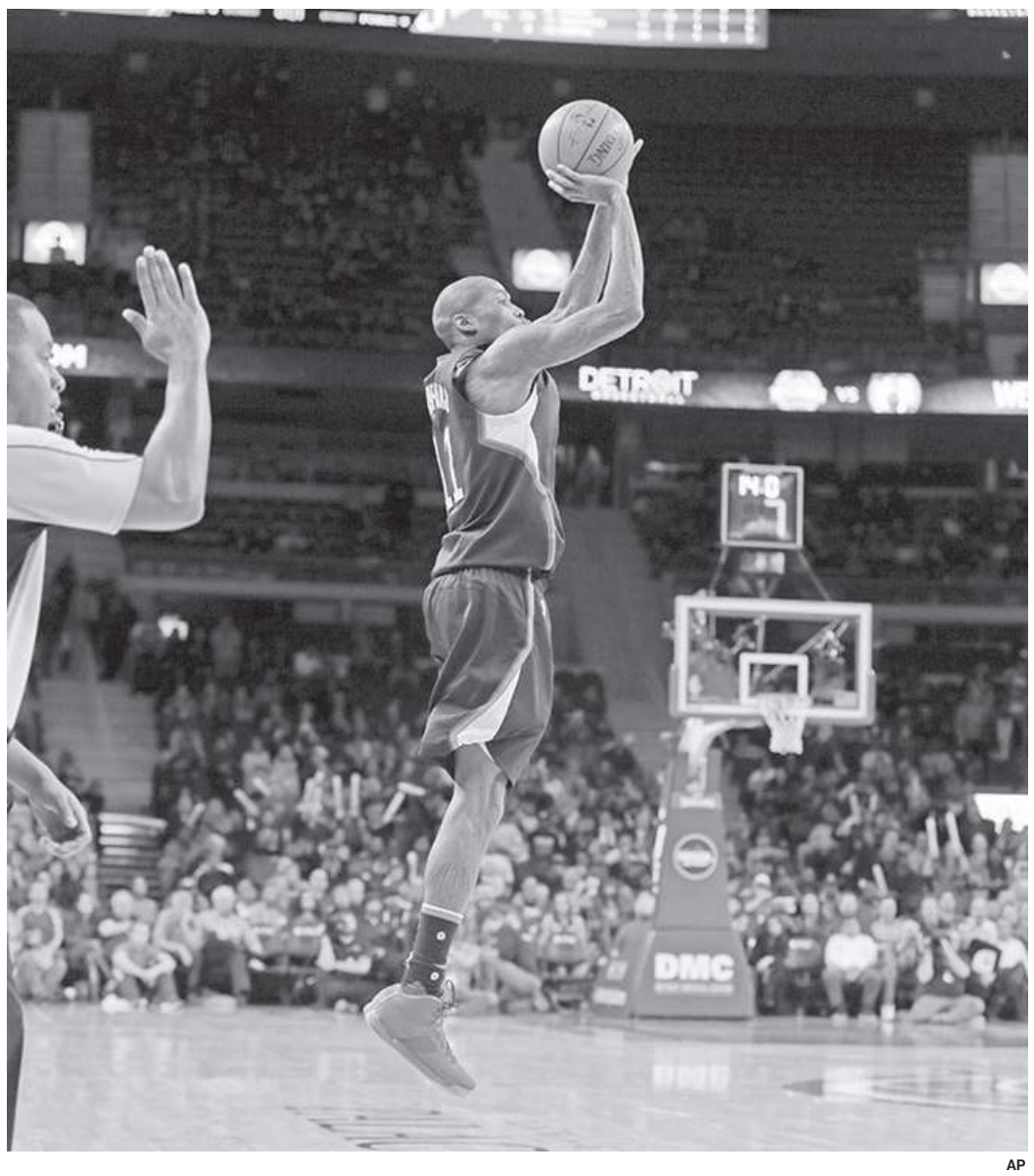
Blake Griffin made a pair of free throws with 38.8 seconds remaining to put the Clippers ahead 102-101. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope tied it by going 1 for 2 from the foul line with 30.5 seconds left.

After Crawford's basket, the Clippers fouled Reggie Jackson with 9.3 seconds left. He made the first shot, missed the second, and teammate Andre Drummond got two chances for a tying tip-in, but missed both.

Jackson missed a desperation shot at the buzzer.

Griffin finished with 34 points for the Clippers, J.J. Redick had 24 and Chris Paul put up 13 points and 12 assists.

Jackson finished with 34 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists. Drummond added 20 points and 15 rebounds.



AP

Los Angeles Clippers guard Jamal Crawford shoots the go-ahead three-point basket during overtime of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons, Monday, Dec. 14, 2015, in Auburn Hills, Mich.

Nuggets 114, Rockets 108

In Denver, Will Barton scored 23 points, including two game-sealing free throws with 13.5 seconds remaining, and Denver held off Houston after a sneaker-tossing incident nearly turned the tide.

Gary Harris added a career-high 21 points to help the Nuggets complete a three-game sweep of the Rockets in the season series.

A tossed shoe allowed the Rockets to rebound from a big deficit late in the fourth quarter. Houston's Trevor Ariza lost a sneaker with 4:53 remaining and his team trailing by 15. Barton picked it up and threw it off the court so as not to trip on it, leading to a technical for delay of game. The Rockets cut the deficit to 110-108 late and had a chance to take the lead. But Jason Terry missed a 3-pointer with 15.9 seconds left and Barton wrapped up the win from the line.

James Harden finished with 24 points for the Rockets, including five of the team's season-high 18 3-pointers.

Heat 100, Hawks 88

In Atlanta, Chris Bosh scored 24 points, Gerald Green had 20 and Miami handed slumping Atlanta another home loss.

Goran Dragic added 12 points despite having part of a tooth knocked out in the third quarter. After getting the bleeding stopped, he returned to finish the game.

Miami won just 24 hours after rallying from 16 points down to beat Memphis, snapping a three-game losing streak. This time, the Heat led comfortably most of the way, the margin in double figures through nearly the entire second half.

Atlanta was coming off an ugly 103-78 loss two nights earlier to the San Antonio Spurs. This one wasn't much better, the Hawks hardly looking like the team that won 60 games and claimed top seed in the East a season ago.

Kent Bazemore returned to Atlanta's starting lineup and scored a career-high 28 points.

Trail Blazers 105, Pelicans 101

In Portland, Ore., Damian Lillard scored 30 points and Portland beat New Orleans for the seventh straight time.

Gerald Henderson added 19 points off the bench for the Blazers. He matched his career high with four 3-pointers.

Anthony Davis led the Pelicans with 28 points and nine rebounds.

Henderson's reverse layup put the Blazers in front 82-69 early in the fourth quarter, but the Pelicans rallied within five points.

After Lillard hit a 3 for a 95-84 lead, the Pelicans pressured the Blazers, twice coming within four points. Davis' driving layup made it 101-97 with just under a minute left, but it was as close as New Orleans could come.

Bulls 115, 76ers 96

In Chicago, Jimmy Butler had 23 points and Chicago rallied from a halftime deficit to rout lowly Philadelphia.

Nikola Mirotic had 17 points and Tony Snell added 16. Joakim Noah had 15 rebounds and eight assists as the Bulls won their third straight.

After trailing by four at the intermission, the Bulls had a 64-40 advantage in the second half.

The 76ers drop to 1-25 and remain winless through 15 road games. Rookie Jahlil Okafor had 22 points in his first game as a professional in his hometown.

Robert Covington had 15 points and Tony Wroten 12 for Philadelphia.

The Bulls had a 24-19 edge at the end of the first quarter, but the Sixers grabbed a 56-51 halftime lead. Philadelphia made 16 of 25 shots in the second quarter.

Spurs 118, Jazz 81

In San Antonio, Kawhi Leonard had 22 points and San Antonio never trailed.

San Antonio is 21-5, the second-best start in franchise history, on the strength of a 13-0 home record.

LaMarcus Aldridge and Tony Parker added 18 points each for the Spurs.

Derrick Favors led the Jazz with 16 points.

San Antonio led by as many as 46 points while continuing its league-leading defensive efforts.

The Spurs have held 13 of their past 14 opponents under 100 points and led by at least 20 points at the half in three of their last five games.

Grizzlies 112, Wizards 95

In Memphis, Tenn., Marc Gasol had 24 points and 12 rebounds, Mike Conley finished with 18 points and 11 assists and Memphis beat Washington.

The Grizzlies shot 56 percent overall and were 10 for 15 on 3-pointers.

Matt Barnes scored 20 points for the Grizzlies and shot 4 for 5 on 3s. Courtney Lee and Jeff Green finished with 15 points each and Mario Chalmers had 12.

Gary Neal led the Wizards with 24 points. John Wall, the team's leading scorer at over 20 per game, shot 2 of 11 and had six points.

Washington has lost three of four.

Pacers 106, Raptors 90

In Indianapolis, Jordan Hill had season highs with 20 points and 13 rebounds, Monta Ellis had 18 points and Indiana ended Toronto's four-game winning streak.

C.J. Miles added 17 points for the Pacers, who have won two of three games.

Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan each scored 20 points for the Raptors.

Indiana used a 39-4 run in the first half to climb out of a 21-point deficit and Lavoy Allen made two free throws to give the Pacers a 29-28 lead at the 11:38 mark in the second quarter.

Indiana took a 44-30 lead when Ellis converted a three-point play with 4:08 remaining in the first half.

Indiana snapped a five-game skid against Toronto, including a 106-99 loss in the season-opener on Oct. 28.

Mavericks 104, Suns 94

In Dallas, Chandler Parsons scored 15 of his 17 points in the second half, Raymond Felton followed his second career triple-double with 17 points and Dallas beat former teammate Tyson Chandler and Phoenix.

Parsons has been coming off the bench lately with a minutes restriction in place following offseason knee surgery. He had eight points during a 20-4 run to finish the third quarter, when Dallas made 13 of its last 14 shots to take a 77-58 lead.

After the Suns pulled within 10, Parsons had a four-point play and another 3 to help Dallas push the lead back to 15.

Deron Williams led Dallas with 18 points, including a 3-pointer to help hold off another Phoenix push.

Eric Bledsoe led the Suns with 23 points and seven assists.

Magic 105, Nets 82

In New York, Nikola Vucevic scored 18 points, Elfrid Payton had 17 and Orlando got its first victory in Brooklyn.

Tobias Harris had 15 points and nine rebounds for the Magic, who had dropped all six games here since the Nets moved for the 2012-13 season. They had little trouble in this one, going ahead just before halftime and gradually extending their lead throughout the second half.

The Magic bounced back after consecutive losses, including a 111-76 embarrassment at home against Cleveland on Friday. They shot 54 percent from the field and led by 26 in the fourth quarter.

Jarrett Jack scored 15 points for the Nets, who have dropped two in a row at home after winning six of their previous seven. Brooklyn shot just 39 percent.

NBA ref comes out following Rondo anti-gay slur

NEW YORK (AP)—Veteran NBA referee Bill Kennedy has told Yahoo! Sports he is gay after Kings guard Rajon Rondo directed a gay slur at him during a game.

Kennedy told Yahoo! he is "proud to be an NBA referee and I am proud to be a gay man," adding that he chose to come out in hopes of sending a message "that you must allow no one to make you feel ashamed of who you are."

Rondo was suspended one game by the NBA for directing a derogatory and offensive term toward a referee in the Kings' game against Boston in Mexico on Dec. 3. Rondo apologized Monday and the Kings said his comments were disrespectful and offensive.

Kennedy is in his 18th season as an NBA official, having worked more than 1,050 regular-season games and five in the NBA Finals.

AP

Bill Kennedy, in his 18th season as an NBA official, said, "You must allow no one to make you feel ashamed."

"I wholeheartedly support Bill's decision to live his life proudly and openly," NBA commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement. "Throughout his 18-year career with the league, Bill has excelled as a referee because of his passion, dedication and courage. Those qualities will continue to serve him well both as a game official and as a positive influence for others. While our league has made great progress, our work continues to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity."

The league took more than a week before announcing a penalty for Rondo, who will sit out Sacramento's game against Houston today. Yahoo! reported that Kennedy and another referee told league investigators that Rondo used profanity and anti-gay comments.

"Rajon's comment was disrespectful and offensive, and we wholeheartedly disapprove of any language that discriminates or disparages others based on sexual orientation or anything else," Kings general manager Vlade Divac said. "Rajon has apologized."

Rondo wrote on Twitter that his actions during the game "were out of frustration and emotion, period!"

Saipan runners complete Mt. Fuji Marathon

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A small group of Saipan runners completed last month's 4th Annual Mt. Fuji Marathon.

Perennial long-distance run champion Mamiko Berger led the group, finishing the circuit course around Lake Kawaguchi and Saiko Lake in the town of Fuji-Kawaguchiko in Yamanashi, Japan, in 3:25:00.

Mamiko's husband Joshua, Tiffani Lin, and Steven Johnson completed the group. Joshua and Lin crossed the finish line together at the 4:56:00 mark, while Johnson made the four-hour barrier after submitting 3:50:22. Mamiko and Johnson got invites to the 42.19K race after their outstanding showing in the Saipan Marathon early this year with the former joining the race for the fourth straight time and the latter debuting in the event that was held last Nov. 29.

"This was my slowest but this race was the best one ever because I ran with a friend of mine from Australia (Vanessa Stewart) and we finished holding our hands together. She and her husband had been invited to Fuji Marathon for years because her husband used to organize Melbourne Marathon, which is one of sister marathons of Fuji Marathon," Mamiko said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan runners pose with their friends after completing the Mt. Fuji Marathon last month in Japan.

"It was fun, especially when my husband did a marathon. I could not interact with them much during the race but I said hi to them couple of times along the course," the 45-year-old runner added.

For his part, Johnson said he was happy to be reunited with his former running buddies and represent the CNMI to the annual competition.

"It was really fun getting to represent the CNMI with other runners. I had moved to Guam in August so I hadn't seen any of them for quite some time. Getting to share that moment with some familiar faces made the race even more special," Johnson said.

Lin, on the other hand, savored the beautiful course, which offers participants the scenic view of the snow-capped peak of Mt. Fuji and the spectacular autumn leaves surrounding the two lakes.

"The race/course was a beautiful course with views of Mt. Fuji and pristine mountain lakes throughout. The best part of the course was running it with friends from Saipan—we all had a great time and saw each other at multiple points during the race. We always had smiles on our faces," Lin said.

Japan's Yuta Koyama was the top overall finisher in last month's race and notched his third straight men's division championship after clocking in at 2:25:25, while compatriot Yuki Ogawa ruled the women's field after logging 2:57:26. Japan's Norio Kamijo holds the men's course record (2:21:53/2012), while Mayumi Uchiyama (2:51:51/2014) owns the women's mark.

Japanese papers to feature NMI sports

Four Japanese newspapers will feature articles on sports activities in Saipan following an upcoming media FAM this month by *Nishinihon Sports*.

The daily sports newspapers circulates 1.5 million copies via subscription and newsstands, targeting males in their 30s to 60s. The paper will also conduct shooting on behalf of three affiliated newspapers, *Daily Sports*, *Chunichi Sports*, and *Tokyo Chunichi Sports*.

"We're looking forward to Nishinihon's sports tour this week," said Marianas Visitor Authority Marketing manager Bruce Bateman. "This is another opportunity for us to highlight the sports tourism appeal of the Northern Marianas to potential visitors from Japan."

The newspaper writer and cameraman are scheduled to visit Managaha, Kingfisher Golf Links, an ATV tour with Marianas Trekking, PauPau Beach and Saipan Beach Pathway, along with other scenic sites and activities in Saipan.

The MVA organizes several sporting events each year to attract visitors, including the Saipan Marathon, Hell of the Marianas, and several triathlons.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven.

Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia.

The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides directdailyflights from Seoul and Busan and Jeju Air provides daily service from Seoul. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou,to Saipan is available. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan with one stop.United States mainland connections can be made by Delta Air Lines to Saipan via Tokyo Narita, and United Airlines via Guam.Russian and Taiwanese visitors usually arrive via Seoul. For more information, visit-www.mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

PGC aims to expand Aussie, NZ participation

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Pacific Games Council is aiming to expand the roles of Australia and New Zealand in future Pacific Games after the trial they made in the 15th edition of the quadrennial meet hosted by Papua New Guinea.

Australia and New Zealand competed for the first time in Port Moresby but in only four sports—rugby 7s, sailing, taekwondo, and weightlifting.

The PGC unanimously voted last year to allow Australia and New Zealand compete as they believe it would benefit the Pacific Island athletes.

The two sports powerhouse countries in Oceania combined for 67 medals with Australia collecting 17 gold, 19 silver, and 11 bronze to finish sixth in the overall tally. The Kiwis had a 1-9-10 haul with Andrea Kilday winning the lone gold in taekwondo's women's -46kg division.

PGC executive director Andrew Mingoue, in an exclusive interview by *Saipan Tribune* via Skype, said the council is currently reviewing the impact of the participation made by Australia and New Zealand. He added that so far the reviews were positive.

"A report to the members of the PGC will be sent next year and debated at our annual general membership meeting in May. The signs so far are positive that the trial went well and we are looking for opportunities to expand the trial next time in 2019," Minogue said.

Minogue, in an earlier interview by PNG's *Post Courier* and Radio New Zealand, said Australia and New Zealand improved the level of competition in the last Pacific Games.

"Allowing athletes from Australia and New Zealand compete lifted the standards of the Games."

An example would be the rugby 7s finals between Australia and Fiji where the latter scored a thrilling 12-10 victory.

The International Weightlifting Federation also recognized the Pacific Games' weightlifting event as a formal qualifier for the 2016 Summer Olympics to be held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

MVA

From Page 28

The Northern Marianas Sports Association, which is now in charge of maintaining the Oleai Sports Complex, is waiting for the money given by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be released.

The FEMA grant is coursed through the Governor's Office since the Oleai Sports Complex is built on public land.

34

From Page 28

Wang finished behind Sugie, but bagged PBTs of 1:05.54 and 1:08.30, respectively.

In the girls division, Tsunami Saipan's Maria Batallones' PBT of 1:48.69 best the 1:48.74 PBT of SSC's Andrei Kaith Lynn Chavez, while in the 17-and-over age group, Tsunami Saipan's Daime Rivera also posted a PBT with her 1:23.10.

In the 9 to 10 age group, four Tsunami Saipan swimmers got PBTs. The list includes Ashley Dangol (1:14.01), Nanaka Watanabe (1:18.42), Kana Suzuki (1:33.90), and Asaka Litulumar (1:38.29). Nanaka's older sister, Aika was one of the three PBT getters in the girls 11 to 12 age group as the latter clocked in at 1:14.54. Aika's fellow Tsunami Saipan swimmer Sophia Gauran and SSC's Coume Kaga were the two other swimmers to register PBTs with their 1:10.75 and 1:21.14, respectively.

In the 13 to 14 age group, Tsunami Saipan's Kyona Rivera (1:14.49), Rei Sekiguchi (1:18.49), and Kathrine Illahi (1:22.04) placed behind teammate Miku Tammy (1:08.39), but the first three marked PBTs.

Meanwhile, results in the other freestyle races in last Saturday's first meet of the season will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Thursday issue.

MBI/KFC

From Page 28

quarter, while Devero added 8 to give MBI/KFC a double-digit spread, 66-53, after Tan Holdings sliced the deficit to two at the break, 36-38. Tan Holdings was behind by 9, 18-27, at the start of the second quarter, but threatened MBI/KFC after getting 10 markers from Elmer Esdrelon in that period.

Esdrelon continued to lead Tan Holdings' recovery, but Fernando counter-attacked, picking up where Capalad left off in the final canto. Fernando, who was held to a field goal in the third frame, poured 17 points in the fourth quarter, including 10 straight markers past the halfway mark of the payoff period to keep MBI/KFC's safe lead.

Meanwhile, Tan Holdings quickly recovered from its first loss in the season and notched its fifth win after outclassing McDonald in last Monday's second game, 80-71.

Paul Quizon, who was limited to 9 points in their defeat at the hands of MBI/KFC, redeemed himself against McDonald's, tallying a game-high 29 points. He fired 16 of them in the first half, where Tan Holdings managed to build a 45-34 advantage, and then added 9 more in the third to complete the breakaway as his team enjoyed a 63-46 lead. McDonald's never made headway to drop to a 2-4 record.

Friday Game

MBI/KFC 95 – Fernando 37, Capalad 25, Devero 21, Inos 10, Ganacao 2.

Tan Holdings 82 – Esdrelon 30, Duenas 15, Nonato 14, Quizon 9, Palacios 8, Rivera 4, Matsutaro 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-18, 38-36, 66-53, 95-82.

Monday Game

Tan Holdings 80 – Quizon 29, Matsutaro 13, Rivera 13, Nonato 10, Macoto 7, Esdrelon 3.

McDonald's 71 – Gaspar 18, Mc. Achas 17, Palacios 14, Gapor 11, Mi. Achas 4, Rigua 2, L. Achas 2.

Scoring by quarters: 17-16, 45-34, 63-46, 80-71.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	16	10	.615	—
Boston	14	10	.583	1
New York	11	14	.440	4½
Brooklyn	7	17	.292	8
Philadelphia	1	25	.038	15
Southeast Division				
Charlotte	14	9	.609	—
Miami	14	9	.609	—
Orlando	13	11	.542	1½
Atlanta	14	12	.538	1½
Washington	10	13	.435	4
Central Division				
Cleveland	15	7	.682	—
Chicago	14	8	.636	1
Indiana	14	9	.609	1½
Detroit	14	12	.538	3
Milwaukee	10	15	.400	6½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	21	5	.808	—
Dallas	14	11	.560	6½
Memphis	14	12	.538	7
Houston	12	13	.480	8½
New Orleans	6	18	.250	14
Northwest Division				
Oklahoma City	16	8	.667	—
Utah	10	13	.435	5½
Portland	11	15	.423	6
Denver	10	14	.417	6
Minnesota	9	14	.391	6½
Pacific Division				
Golden State	24	1	.960	—
L.A. Clippers	15	10	.600	9
Phoenix	11	15	.423	13½
Sacramento	9	15	.375	14½
L.A. Lakers	3	21	.125	20½

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	11	2	0	.846	402	253
N.Y. Jets	8	5	0	.615	325	256
Buffalo	6	7	0	.462	316	301
Miami	5	8	0	.385	264	331
South						
Indianapolis	6	7	0	.462	275	356
Houston	6	7	0	.462	259	291
Jacksonville	5	8	0	.385	326	357
Tennessee	3	10	0	.231	253	326
North						
Cincinnati	10	3	0	.769	354	229
Pittsburgh	8	5	0	.615	344	260
Baltimore	4	9	0	.308	278	326
Cleveland	3	10	0	.231	240	357
West						
Denver	10	3	0	.769	281	225
Kansas City	8	5	0	.615	331	243
Oakland	6	7	0	.462	299	326
San Diego	3	10	0	.231	250	334

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	6	7	0	.462	281	307
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	301	322
N.Y. Giants	6	7	0	.462	338	320
Dallas	4	9	0	.308	230	305
South						
y-Carolina	13	0	0	1.000	411	243
Tampa Bay	6	7	0	.462	288	322
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	279	295
New Orleans	5	8	0	.385	323	397
North						
Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	317	245
Minnesota	8	5	0	.615	258	255
Chicago	5	8	0	.385	272	314
Detroit	4	9	0	.308	267	336
West						
x-Arizona	11	2	0	.846	405	252
Seattle	8	5	0	.615	340	235
St. Louis	5	8	0	.385	210	271
San Francisco	4	9	0	.308	188	315

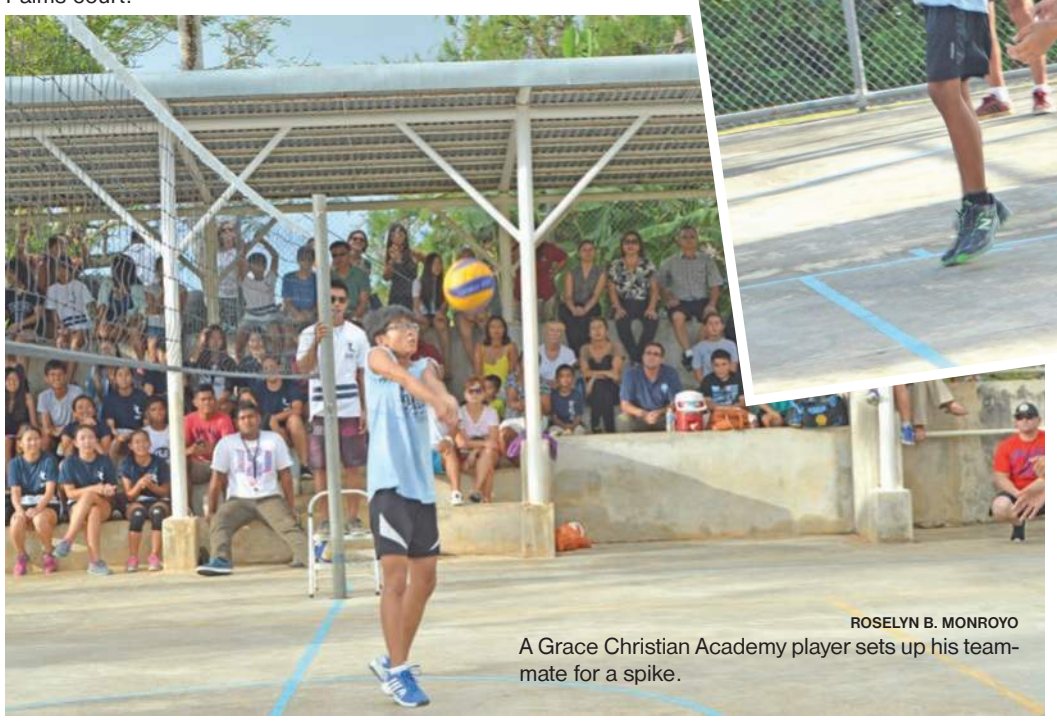
x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COPSSA Middle School Volleyball League Finals

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Grace Christian Academy player bumps the ball during their title game against Saipan International School in the middle school division of the 2015-2016 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association Volleyball League early this month at the Whispering Palms court.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Grace Christian Academy player sets up his teammate for a spike.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School players and their coaches pose for a photo after winning over Grace Christian Academy.

Grace Christian Academy ' Eun Syu Hahn spikes the ball.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Grace Christian Academy's Joshua Pajarillaga bumps the ball from the backline.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Saipan International School female player gets the first ball, while her teammates looks on.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan International School's Sally Lai receives a short serve from Grace Christian Academy.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School's Malika Miyawaki serves.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School coaches watch from the sideline as their player bumps the ball after a serve from Grace Christian Academy.

Beckham scores 2 TDs to help Giants beat Dolphins, 31-24

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Saipan runners complete Mt. Fuji Marathon

PAGE 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan Swim Club's Lennosuke Suzuki in action during the 100m freestyle race in last Saturday's SSC Double Distance Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

34 swimmers earn PBTs in 100m freestyle

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Swim Club and Tsunami Saipan swimmers showed little or no rust at all despite a long break as majority of them posted personal best times in the 100m freestyle race during last Saturday's SSC Double Distance Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

Thirty-four swimmers from the two clubs, which only had their first official competition after more than three months due to Typhoon Soudelor, got PBTs with those entered in the boys 9 to 10 age group registering the most PBTs at six. SSC's Jinnosuke Suzuki was the fastest in the group, timing in at 1:11.03, more than two seconds better than his old PBT of 1:13.90. Other PBT-getters in the division were Tsunami Saipan's Anthony Camacho-Deleon Guerrero (1:12.56), Isaiah Aleksenko (1:16.11), Hans Xu (1:18.84), and Arman Rechucher (1:38.64) and SSC's Taiyo Akimaru (1:18.21).

In the boys U8 age group, Tsunami Saipan's Aasish Dangol clocked in at 1:42.05 to reset his PBT (1:58.05), while SSC's Wataru Kadokura and Robert De Courteny had the same achievement after recording 1:54.38 and 1:57.95, respectively.

In the boys 11 to 12 age group, four made PBTs with SSC's Lennosuke Suzuki leading the way with his 1:04.07 (from 1:07.23). Lennosuke's teammate Akira Kadokura's new PBT is 1:28.94, while Tsunami Saipan's Juhn Tenorio and Rentaro Suzuki's PBTs read at 1:14.49 and 1:34.64, respectively.

In the boys 13 to 14 age group, Tsunami Saipan's Mark Maestro bested two SSC bets with his PBT of 1:06.34. SSC's Taiga Sato submitted a PBT of 1:08.59 and R.J. Pierce logged 1:14.00.

In the 15 to 16 division, all three SSC members earned PBTs with Kento Akimaru posting 1:00.00, Christian Villacrusis tallying 1:04.21, and David Boyer timing in at 1:05.37.

There were also three entries in the 17-and-over age group and Tsunami Saipan's Takumi Sugie was one of them, notching the fastest time in the entire field with his 59.72 seconds. Sugie's previous PBT was 1:00.61. SSC"s Salofi Welch and Caleb

See 34 on Page 26

MBI/KFC nears regular season sweep

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Micronesian Brokers, Inc./Kentucky Fried Chicken moved a win away from sweeping the regular season of the 2nd JP World Corp. Customer Appreciation Basketball League following a 95-82 victory against Tan Holdings last Friday at Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

MBI/KFC won the battle of unbeaten teams and improved its record to 7-0 after drawing solid offensive games from the trio of Angel Fernando, White Capalad, and Ivan Devero. Fernando led all scorers with his 37 points, while Capalad and Devero chipped in 25 and 21, respectively. Perry Inos was the fourth MBI/KFC player to finish in twin digits, contributing 10.

Capalad knocked in 13 of his total points in the third

See MBI/KFC on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
MBI/KFC's White Capalad pulls up for a corner jumper in their game against Mariana Resort in the JP World caging last week at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium. He scored 25 points in their 95-82 win versus Tan Holdings last Friday.

MVA wants to capitalize on 2020 Olympics

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority is looking to capitalize on the 2020 Summer Olympic Games as it hopes to attract international athletes and teams to train on Saipan.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio, in an exclusive interview by the *Saipan Tribune*, said what needs to be done first is to make sure all sports facilities are up to international standards.

"It would be nice if athletes who will be competing in the Olympics, especially those who are from Europe, to train and acclimatize themselves here on Saipan," said Tenorio, who attended Monday night's Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center.

Tenorio

Tokyo, Japan will host the 22nd edition of the quadrennial Games from July 4 to Aug. 9, 2020, with the National Olympic Statidum the venue of the opening and closing ceremonies.

"It would be interesting and nice to see these Olympic athletes train here on Saipan before going to Tokyo for the Summer Games," added Tenorio.

In 2002, the Republic of Ireland national men's football team trained on Saipan before the 2002 World Cup that was co-hosted by Korea and Japan.

Three-time Olympian Olivier Marceau, who previously represented Switzerland but is now part of the French national triathlon team, is also a permanent fixture in the XTERRA Saipan and Tagaman triathlon events.

Korean Baseball League team LG Twins has also previously made Saipan their training ground if it's still winter in Seoul.

Tenorio said Japan Olympics in 2020 would be build up for the Pacific Mini Games, which Saipan would be hosting for the first time in the summer of 2021.

"Of course it would all lead to the 2021 Mini Games. That's why we need to renovate and improve all sports facilities damaged by several typhoons," added Tenorio, who was part of the committee that presented Saipan's bid to the Pacific Games Council a few years ago.

"The MVA is fully supporting Saipan's hosting of the 2021 Mini Games. It would be a big project that needs the partnership of various government agencies and the private sector," he added.

Repairs and other improvement that needs to be done for all the sports facilities inside the Oleai Sports Complex is expected to start early next year.

See MVA on Page 26